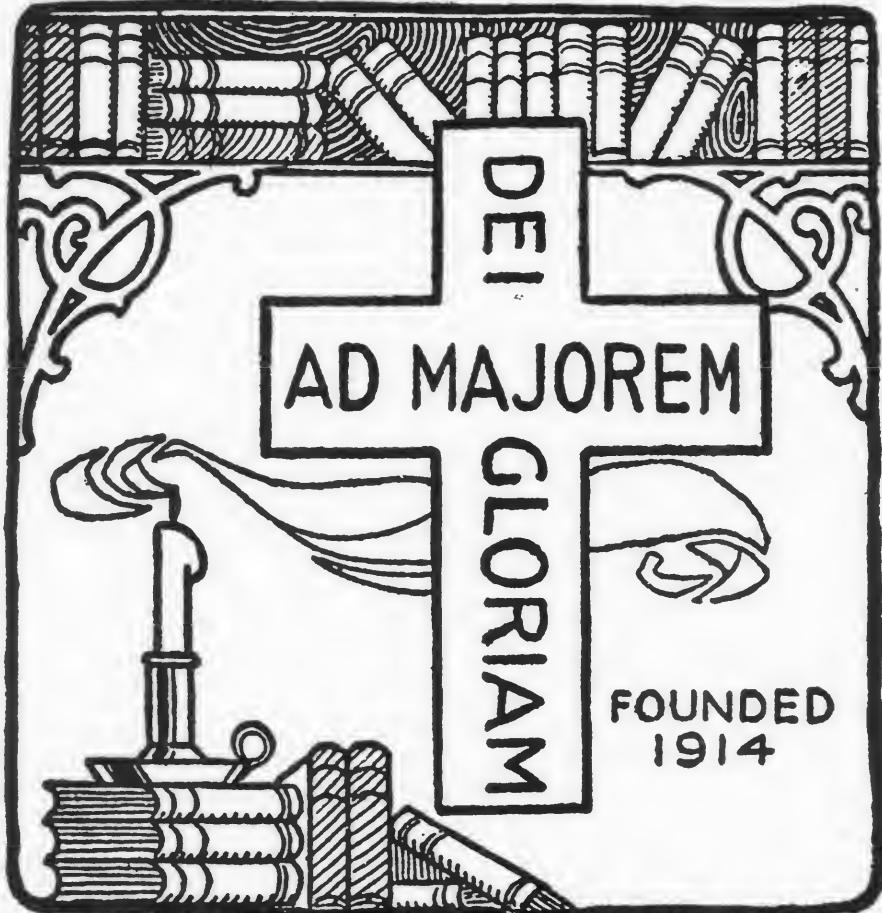


SAVING TRUTHS

F.J.JOBSON. D.D.



CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
EMORY UNIVERSITY, GA.



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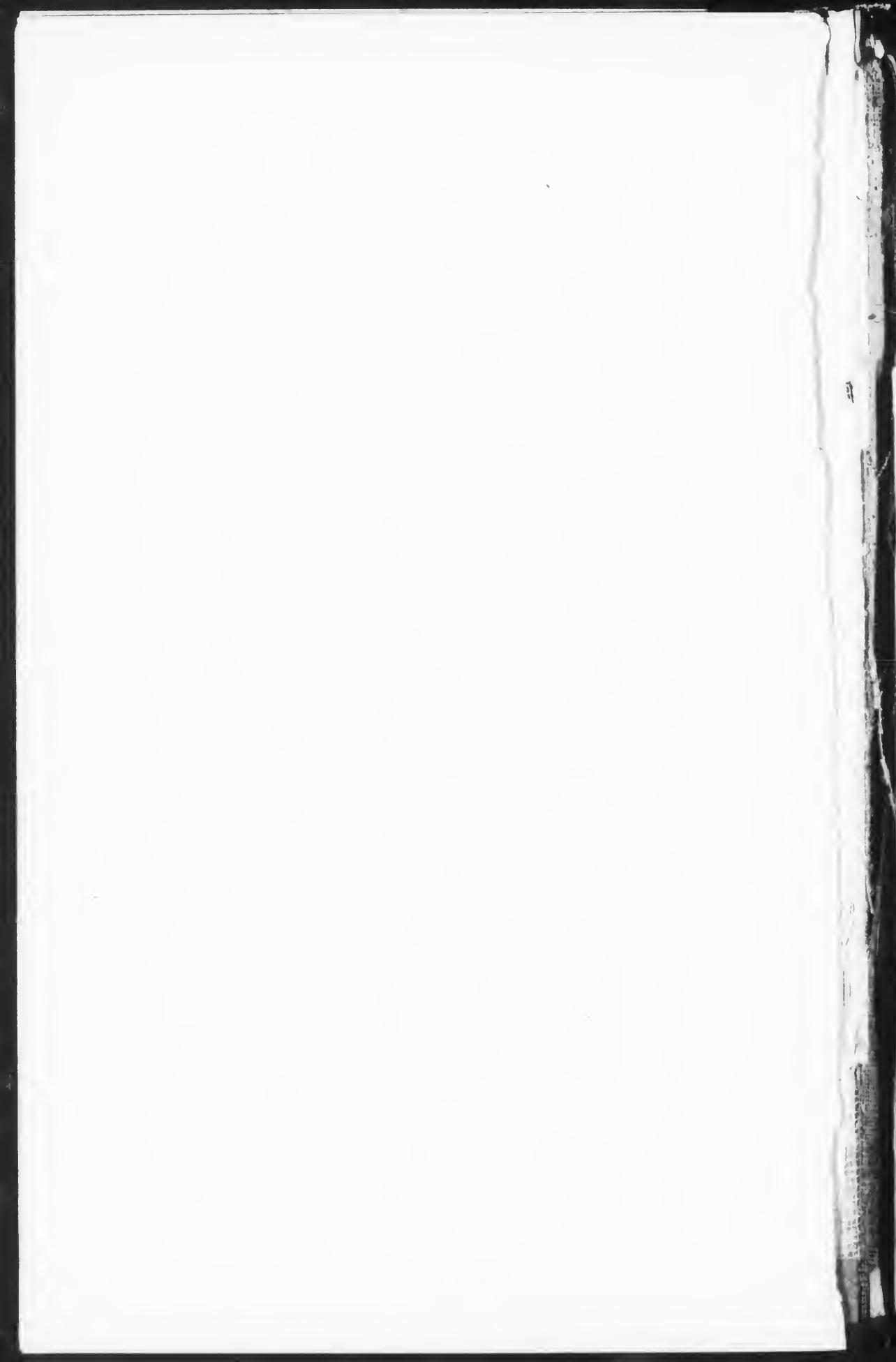
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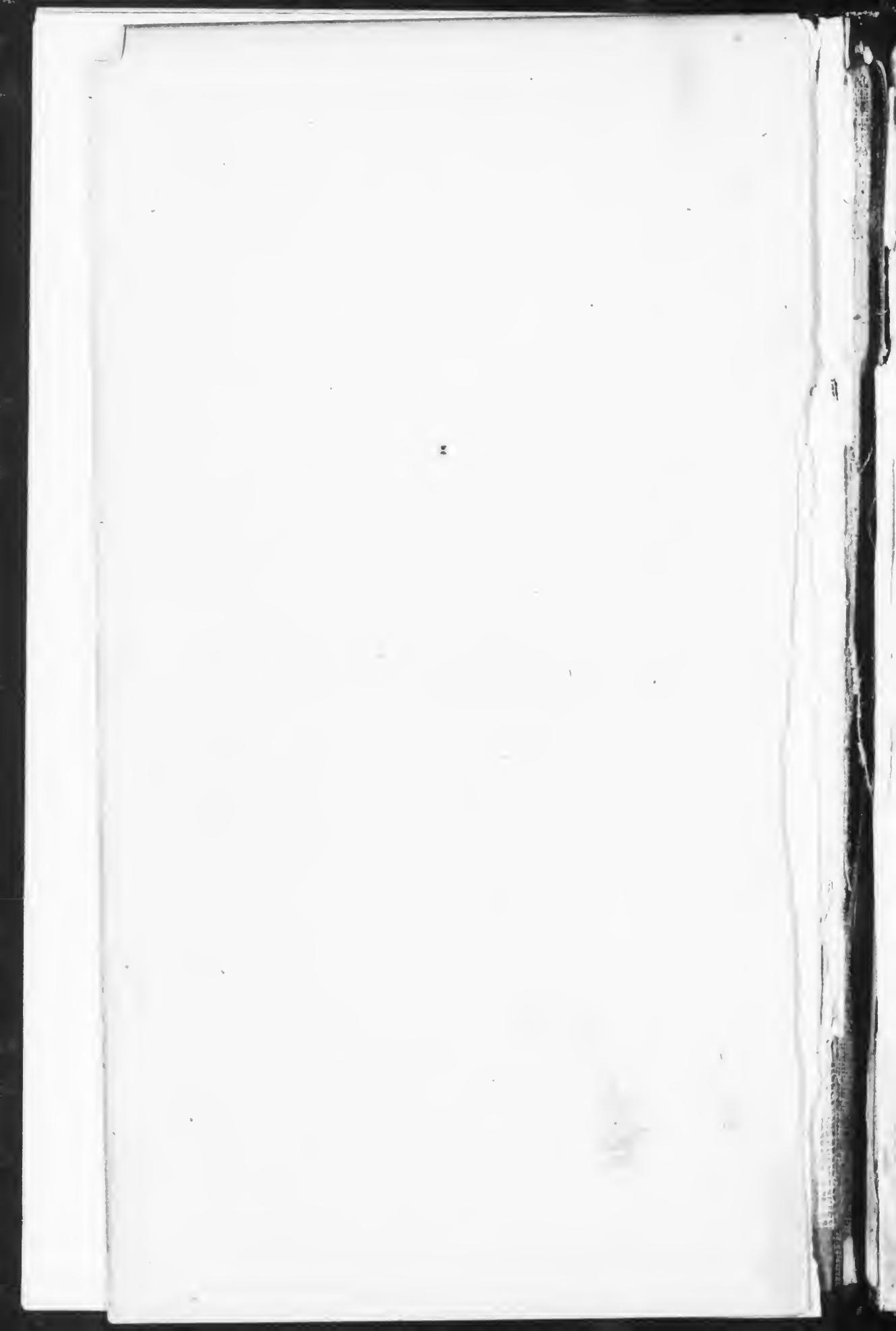
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BY

FREDERICK J. JOBSON, D.D.

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AND IN TOKEN OF  
CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP,  
This Volume  
IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY  
INSCRIBED.

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## PREFACE.

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USEFULNESS is the sole object of this publication. For this, all other considerations have been studiously excluded ; and Saving Truth—for which proof may at once be had from Holy Scripture and from personal experience—has been plainly set forth. The writer is thankful to know that his object has been, to some extent, already attained ; for the several Addresses composing the volume having been issued separately, as they were prepared, and widely circulated, gratifying testimonies of

## *Preface.*

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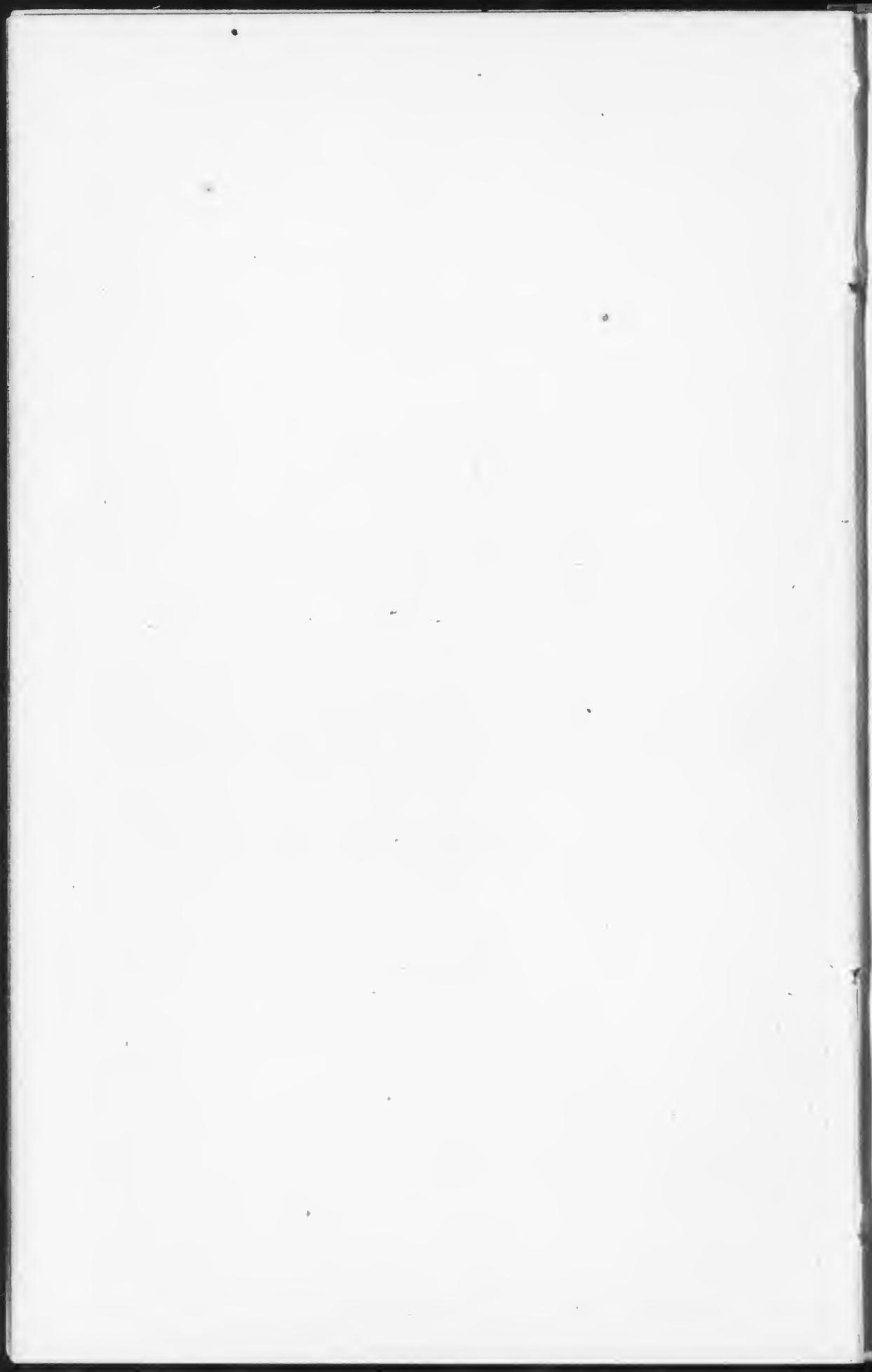
their beneficial service have been received. Requests having been made for their publication in a collected form, they are now sent forth together, with the earnest prayer to Almighty God that He would condescend to employ them for the salvation of souls and for His own glory.

CITY-ROAD, LONDON.

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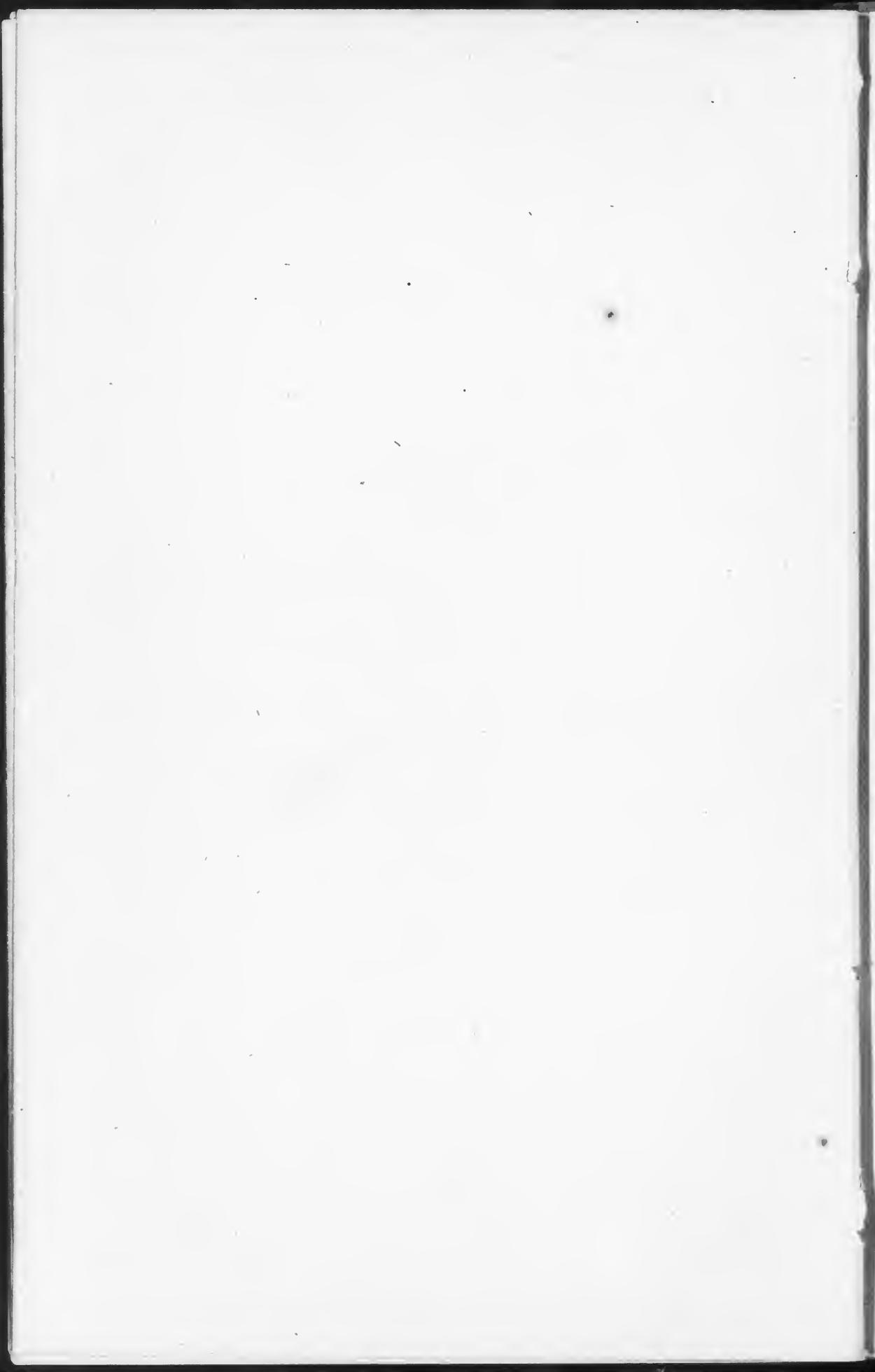


I.

# SERIOUS TRUTHS

FOR

CONSIDERATION.



## SERIOUS TRUTHS.

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Reader,

HAVE YOU EVER SPENT A SINGLE HOUR IN CONTINUOUS THOUGHT UPON YOUR SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL INTERESTS? You have spent many hours in thinking of temporal things; and have shown by your devoted attention to them, that you are capable of fixing your mind upon a given object, and of pursuing it with persistent energy. Indeed, for thought on earthly concerns, ordinary periods have not been viewed as long enough, and you have not unfrequently deprived yourself of sleep, and borrowed time from the night, to think further on what had engrossed your powers during the day. But you know the supreme importance of what relates to your undying soul, over what temporarily belongs to your perishable body. You know that you are here but for a few years, that you must, afterwards, live for ever in unspeakable happiness, or indescribable

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misery ; and that upon your character in this brief probationary state of existence, depends your everlasting destiny in the world to come. Then, what subject is so important to you as that of your spiritual and eternal welfare ? and what subject ought to employ your thoughts in comparison with it ? Is it rational to pass months and years in following things that are temporal, and not to occupy a single hour with things that are eternal ? Resolve to devote this hour to consideration for your soul. You have power over your own mind. You can fix your thoughts intently on the subject of your choice. Make now a determined effort ; and for a brief period, at least, act the manly part of constraining your reason to exercise itself on what is transcendently important to you, and on what you know ought to have precedence of all things, whatever. You have this interval unengaged by indispensable attention to other cares. Employ it, resolutely, in serious thoughts upon your spiritual state, before God, and in its relation to eternity.

And do you not feel, within yourself, that *you are not fulfilling the grand object of existence, and that in your present condition, you are unprepared for death, and for the eternal world ?* There is a deep consciousness of this within

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your nature, which is strengthened by reflection on the actions of your past life. What is your state, now? It is one of alienation from God, the awful and infinite Source of your being. You have no delight in contemplating His character; no communion with Him; and no enjoyment in His service. You pass through whole days without thinking of Him; and, if a thought of His presence arise within your mind, it is instantly suppressed as an unwelcome intruder. Your thoughts, affections, and pursuits, are all of earth and the creature, and you have no reference in what you do to the glory of the Creator. *Is it not true?* Is it not a fact supported by indisputable proof? What is the habitual complexion of your mind? Where fly your multitudinous thoughts? What calls forth your strongest energies? What gives you the sweetest pleasure, and highest delight? Answer these inquiries, in faithfulness to yourself; and then say, if you are not living "without God in the world." If there were no Almighty Creator and Governor of the universe; if there had been no Divine Benefactor, sustaining, protecting, and blessing you, from day to day; if there were to be no hereafter, and you had no immortality of spiritual existence, you could only live, and act, as you do. *Is it not so?* Reflect, and answer according to

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truth; and you will acknowledge that you are not of God, but of the world.

You are not satisfied in this state of mind and heart. It is not reasonable that you should be. You know that you are an accountable being. The monitor within often reminds you that you were made for higher ends than those which you pursue; and that for all the deeds done in the body, God will bring you to judgment. Mercifully, it is a law of man's nature, not to have satisfaction, but in a sense of doing right. And this law within will maintain its authority, whatever may be the fictitious circumstances without to dazzle and to allure. No human being can approve himself unless he knows that he aims at doing what is right and good before God and man; and without self-approval, as to purpose, the soul can have no rest. There is a feeling of dishonour and condemnation in the breast of the unfaithful servant, who neglects his master's interests, and who abuses his master's confidence; and it is so with all who know that they were made for God, and yet neglect His service, and abuse His goodness. *It must be so.* And as the Scripture declares, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Then, there are the dreadful consequences in the life to come

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which haunt the mind, and disturb it amidst its false pleasures and wrong pursuits.

READER, pause on this topic, and compel your soul to say if this declaration is true, and that from its own experience. Has not this state of dissatisfaction with self, this inward disquietude, this unrest of soul been yours ? Waive not the inquiry, because it is unpleasant. Bring the mind resolutely to it, and hold it firmly there, until the conclusion is distinct and positive before it. You *know* that it is with the ungodly as here affirmed. It is so with *you*; and it must ever be so, while you love not God, nor glorify Him.

This you admit. But you profess the purpose to *amend your life at some more convenient season than the present, and then to apply your powers to their intended object, that you may become the willing and obedient servant of the Lord.* By what law, ask yourself, are you justified in the neglect of duty ? If you ought to serve God at all, you ought to serve Him *now*. Think of this and say upon what ground you can reasonably rest the purpose to delay. Has not the Almighty the same claims upon you now, that He will have then ? In what Revelation is it found that a part, and not the whole, of your lifetime is to be given to God ? Can you find, anywhere, in the Bible, or in human experience, that man's pro-

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bationary life is too long in which to prepare for eternity? Have the best of men found it to be so? Did any one of them say—even the longest livers—that they had time to spare? Have not all God's servants hearkened, approvingly, to the admonition, "Redeeming the time, knowing that the days are evil?" Is it becoming that you should give your youth and strength to rebellion against the Most High, and then your weakness and infirmity to His service? And is it grateful and appropriate that the flower and fruit of life should be given to Satan, and its withered stalk be offered to the Lord?

But consider what you are really doing by this delay. You are *depriving your soul of its highest good, and of its fullest enjoyment.* You have seen that in a state of alienation from God a man can have no peace; but in the service of Jehovah there is more than peace. There is happiness. There is the blissful satisfaction of feeling that there is real and substantial good possessed by rightly directed faculties. Religion is not a mere arbitrary government of man, without reference to his adaptations and capacities. It contemplates his nature, and supplies to it what it needs, and what will draw forth that nature to its utmost reach. It fills the heart, with all its yearnings, and satisfies it with goodness. Nothing else

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can do this. As soon might a triangle fill a circle, or the toys of childhood give solid enjoyment to man, as the ill-proportioned and empty baubles of earth fill the circumference of the soul's immortal desires. *It cannot be.* The adaptation is not there. In the very nature of things, it is impracticable. And all attempts to satisfy the spiritual mind with temporal things, are attempts for a hopeless impossibility. Reflect on this, and say if it is not a self-evident truth which cannot be denied?

But in real Religion there is satisfactory pleasure and true happiness. There is the joyful assurance of living under the favour of God, and not under His frown. There is the inestimable privilege of communion with Him, and of casting all your care upon Him who careth for you. There is the settled confidence that the course of your life, with all its gains and losses, enjoyments and sufferings, is under the superintending Providence of your Heavenly Father; who will make all things work together for your good. There is companionship with the most upright and pure of mankind. And amidst all the dangers of this mortal life, there is the consciousness of safety for eternity, with the blissful anticipation of everlasting enjoyments in the life to come. With all this good in possession, and with all this blessedness in pro-

## *Serious Truths.*

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spect, how can the servant of God be otherwise than happy? It is not denied that in Religion there is self-denial, and suffering. There is in it what is opposed to corrupt human nature. But, with it, the preponderance of happiness in this life, is so great over that of a life of worldliness and sin, that reason, properly exercised, can have no difficulty in deciding for it. So that to delay a religious course to a future period, is, in the mean time, to rob your soul of its richest heritage, and voluntarily to deprive yourself of real bliss.

If Religion were gloomy and melancholy in its character, as some represent,—if it brought pain, rather than pleasure to the life of man,—it would be cruelty to your old age, with all its weakness and infirmity, to defer till then the suffering to be endured. In justice to your own nature, you ought to take the increased burden when best able to sustain it. But, it is not so. Religion is not an increase of man's sorrows, but a relief to them. Her "yoke is easy, and her burden is light." Ungodliness is, as we have seen, unsatisfactory. Sinful pleasures, and worldly possessions, do not yield solid enjoyment, as the history and experience of their most successful votaries assuredly prove. No servant of God ever exclaimed of spiritual pursuits,—"All is vanity and vexation

## *Serious Truths.*

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of spirit." No follower of the Saviour, feeling the delights of religion pall upon him, offered, like Tiberius, large rewards for the invention of a new pleasure. No child of God ever gasped, with Lord Byron, a sentence of unmixed misery, such as—

"Years, all winters!"

Or ever, in premature old age, had occasion to declare with him,—

"My days are in the yellow leaf;  
The flower and fruit of life are gone;  
The worm, the canker, and the grief,  
Are mine alone."

No expiring Christian ever shrieked with terror, like professed sceptics, or exclaimed, "I am taking a leap into the dark." To say nothing of the calm serenity of age, as seen in the countenance and demeanour of pious men and women, whom you have known,—perhaps of your own father and mother,—there are present joys which unspeakably surpass all that earthly and sinful possessions and pursuits can possibly afford. Weigh these considerations in the balances of your reason, and say, if to defer religion to a future period of your life, is just and wise to yourself, and if, in doing so, you are not sinning against your own interests.

Consider, also, that by delay, you are dis-

## *Serious Truths.*

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*qualifying yourself* for the possession and enjoyment of what is acknowledged to be essential to your safety and happiness, before you enter upon the life to come. The powers of man decline with the advance of years, so that he becomes less vigorous in intellect, and less capable of active exertion. Memory weakens, and is more and more unable to recall the past with distinctness and certainty. The great Sir Isaac Newton could not, in his old age, recall the process of calculation by which he had demonstrated the movements of the planetary system. And if old men remember signal events and circumstances of youth, which by repeated thought in succeeding years they have fixed indelibly upon the mind, yet they forget what transpired in more recent periods. So that it is not at all uncommon for an aged person, while relating what occurred in the days of his boyhood, to have no remembrance of what took place within the month just past. Then reason becomes increasingly enfeebled. The memory failing, and the mind being unable to hold long enough in comparison the different parts of a subject, the conclusion is uncertain, even if the judgment were in itself unimpaired. Quickness of apprehension, liveliness of emotion, and strength of impulse, fail with the process of years; so that in

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advanced life few men attempt anything that taxes their mental powers to a great extent. An aged man does not enter upon the study of a new language, or upon the investigation of a new branch of science. But Religion, let it be remembered, claims the full powers of the mind; and is above all systems of mere human learning or science. When memory has so far faded in its impressions, that few circumstances of former periods in life can be traced upon it, is that a state in which to begin to think of past sins, for repentance? When reason is weak and feeble, is that a condition of mind in which to unravel the intricacies of conscience, so long neglected and disordered? When apprehension is dull, and the man needs to have things explained to him again and again, is that a situation in which to inquire for the way of life? And when nature is sluggish, and desirous of repose, is that the time in which to flee from the wrath to come?

Think, too, of the *hardening and blunting process* of delay in turning to God. In every instance where conscience is disregarded, its voice within the soul is weakened and deadened, until by repeated abuse, it becomes feeble in its remonstrances. In every resistance of the heart to the strivings of the Holy Spirit, it becomes harder, and less susceptible of impres-

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sion. So that in process of time the conscience becomes *seared*, as with a hot iron : it ceases to vibrate and tremble under accusation ; and the feeling heart of flesh, hardens into the insensibility of stone. The truth and reality of this may be found in the actual condition of persons who do, with the thought of delay, resist conscience and the Holy Ghost. Now, as in the case of Pharaoh, men become increasingly hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin. In youth they feel, and weep, and pray, under faithful preaching of the truth, and under parental calls to love and serve God ; but in advanced life, they have no meltings of soul, and no disposition to heed religious counsel.

Then, a sinner hardened by long continuance in iniquity, will, not unfrequently, be found to have *invented a religion for himself*. He imagines that in this, as in other things, he has become sagacious and knowing, by the process of years and experience. He considers that he is not to be viewed as one who has been unobservant of what has passed in the church and in the world, and as one who has been entirely without thought and judgment on spiritual concerns. He acknowledges himself to be a sinner, like every other human being ; but "God is merciful" he pleads. Then, "remember what he has suffered and done in the

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world." He argues, as if loss and affliction were to be taken as atonement for sin; and as if acts of benevolence and charity would procure eternal life. He believes in Jesus Christ, as a Saviour for all mankind, and, therefore, for him; and believing in Him, how can he, though a sinner, be lost?—the Scriptures forbid the thought of such a direful issue. And thus, in many cases, persons who procrastinate and delay to receive the salvation of the Gospel, have sent them, judicially, from God, "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." It is a fearful truth that the opportunity of salvation may not be extended to the end of life. The resisting, incorrigible sinner may be abandoned by the Almighty as having been sufficiently striven with; and he may be left to perish in his iniquity. "My Spirit," says the Lord, "shall not always strive with man." Knowing not the day of his visitation, the things belonging to his peace may for ever be hidden from his eyes. How dreadful the state, and end of Saul, the king, after that the Lord had departed from him! How terrible the case of Judas Iscariot, after that Satan entered into him! And how alarming the state of many in the present day, who in early life were tender

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and impressible by the Truth, and by the calls of Divine Providence; but who now are evidently hard and insensible under the most faithful preaching, and the most signal events.

Thus, as might be apprehended, the fact is, *few persons, comparatively, are converted to God in old age.* Search the records of the churches for the periods of life at which members were received into them, and you will find that by far the larger number of church-members became such in youth, and not in mature age. It is not often that a man beyond middle life changes his course for religion, any more than for other things. The Rev. William Jay, of Bath, declared at the celebration of his ministerial Jubilee, that in the entire course of his ministry he had not known of more than two persons converted to God after they had reached fifty years of age. And though some may know of a larger proportion of converts in advanced years than that venerable servant of the Lord knew of, yet all will be ready to testify, that conversion in old age is an exception and not the rule. So, that for the sinner to delay repentance and return to God until old age, is to put his soul's interests to tremendous hazard. It is to risk the barest possibility amidst surrounding improbability; and to expect for himself, what nearly all others fail to

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realize. Most persons die as they have lived ; as might be predicated from the purpose and end of probationary existence. Few, comparatively, experience more than overwhelming terror in "death bed-repentance ;" and though we do not limit Almighty grace, which saves the infant and the idiot, and which can save the decrepit, imbecile, and dying old man, yet this is not to be looked for, and relied upon. Life is a state preparatory to death ; and in time character is formed for eternity.

But, it may not be that you will live to be old. You think that you will. Most persons think so for themselves. Yet the large majority of human beings do not realize this. Thirty years include the period allotted to a generation, and is the average length of man's life on earth. Why should you, then, expect unusual extension of probation for yourself ? Are you stronger than many others ? The stout towering tree not unfrequently is broken down suddenly in the storm, while the pliant weakling survives. "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare ; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time." Self-confidence for life is no favourable sign ; for "in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." The mechanism of the body is so fine, and compli-

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cated, that it may at any moment be disordered and disturbed. Disease flies on the wings of the wind. Fever charges the atmosphere with infection. "The pestilence walketh in darkness, and destruction wasteth at noon day." Accidents, against which no foresight can provide, await man in every path. A falling slate, or tile, loosened in its hold upon the roof, may terminate life, instantly. A false step,—a hidden piece of bone,—yea, the failure of a blood vessel in the brain, may occasion sudden death, in which there shall not be space for repentance and faith. How unreasonable, then, to delay the momentous work of salvation to so unlikely and uncertain a period!

And what is even the longest life on earth but as represented in Scripture,—"a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away?" "Man that is born of a woman is of *few* days." Ask the aged man what *he* thinks of the length of life, and he will assure you that it seems but as yesterday when he was young. Look back on the portion of your own existence already gone. It is but as a dream in the night. The whole space of man's earthly existence is so narrow that Inspiration compares it to a mere "hand's breadth." "We spend our years as a tale that is told."

Consider how much of this brief period

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must, of necessity, be spent in worldly concerns, in receiving food, and in sleep; and then see how short the time is for spiritual pursuits, even on the supposition of the longest life. And sooner, or later, the hour of death *will come*. The termination of life is inevitable. No artifice, strength, pecuniary means, or medical aid, can evade, or overcome, this destined leveller of man with the grave. This "one event happeneth unto all." Here the rich and the poor meet together; and there is no discharge in this warfare. "It is appointed unto man once to die."

Then immediately follows ETERNITY, with all its realities: with its inconceivable bliss, or unbearable woe! If on passing the boundary of time, heaven does not reveal to the soul its glory, then it is in darkness *for ever*. Then, if the soul sink down under the weight of unforgiven sin, into the

——— "Dungeon, horrible !  
On all sides round,"

it will fall, not only into a state of banishment from God, but into a state of unmitigated and unending punishment. "There the worm dieth not, and there the fire shall not be quenched." There memory, like a sleepless fiend, will haunt the soul, and pierce it through with many sorrows.

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The remembrance of neglected opportunities, of ruinous delay, and of lost happiness, will plunge it down to unfathomable depths of anguish ; while the knowledge that misery will be everlasting will fill it with burning anguish and maddening despair. This is not exaggerated rhetoric, magnifying in representation an evil to come. It is the language of truth and soberness ; for says Christ of the wicked, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life eternal." The wrath of God will be found by lost sinners to be an awful reality, far beyond what man can conceive ; for "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger ?"

READER, do you now ask, *what you shall do ?* Ponder these truths in your mind until you feel their weight. Consider if they really are truths, and then give to them the attention which they demand. The cause of man's insensibility to spiritual and eternal things is in his not thinking of them. *Thought, and thought alone,* can produce impression. Be rational, and manly, then, and constrain the mind to think of what is all-important to you ; and that not once, only ; or now and then, at distant intervals ; but bring the truths set forth in these pages to your view again and again. Revolve them in your mental vision ; and as they pass before you, ask of each

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truth as it comes,—*Is this so?* And, then, follow out, in your thinking, the consequences belonging to it. The want of *consideration*, rather than knowledge, is the ruin of souls. “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” said Moses, when on the eve of his departure from a stiff-necked and rebellious people. And the Almighty calls upon all creation to hearken to His complaint of the want of consideration by the recipients of His fatherly goodness: “Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know: My people doth not *consider*.” Let not neglect of the duty of consideration be your ruin.

*Employ suitable means to keep the impression of these truths upon your mind.* Let nothing dissipate your thoughts, nor deaden your feelings concerning them. Avoid levity and worldly excitement, which too many resort to for relief from seriousness and spiritual anxiety. You must be serious, if you are to be saved. *Read the Scriptures*, and ascertain from God’s own word, what you ought to *be*, and what you ought to *do*. Remember, it is not human opinion which is to direct and govern you, but

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Divine Revelation ; and that by it you will be judged at the last day. Possessing the right to read and to interpret the Holy Scriptures for yourself, *apply your mind to the diligent study of them*, that they may make you wise unto salvation. Know for yourself if an unforgiven sinner shall perish. Heed not the presumptuous reasonings of men who, professing themselves more merciful than the Lord, would put aside inspired declarations concerning everlasting punishment for sin. And, then, with the full assurance, that "God is angry with the wicked every day," and that He "will by no means spare the guilty," realize the awful fact, that you are condemned by the law, and exposed to everlasting punishment. Ponder in your mind what it is for the immortal soul to perish —to be cast out for ever from the presence of the Most High, and from companionship of the blessed and the good, and to sink down under Divine malediction to the depths of endless misery and despair. Fail not to apply to yourself the truth, that *you* are liable thus to perish for ever, and that, every moment. *Consider the uncertainty of life.* Think of the innumerable dangers which surround you at every step ; and that at any instant your probationary state may close, and you may lose all opportunity for working out the salvation of your soul. *Attend the*

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*House of God*, and learn the truth as expounded and enforced by Christian preachers. Shield not yourself from immediate application of what you hear, by the vague and prevalent idea, that what is proclaimed from the pulpit is for the congregation in general, but not for you, personally. Meditate upon the truths you read and hear, and think of them as you rise up, as you lie down, and as you walk by the way. Let not worldly cares, and perishable things dissipate your thoughts, and divert your mind from what is most important. Reflect, that it is for everlasting life you are inquiring, and that the object you have in view infinitely surpasses, in value, any other object that can be contemplated. Hearken not to the evil counsels of the ungodly, who, deriding your serious looks and inquiries, would lead you forth to earthly pleasures and pastimes, as the true remedy for your anxieties and fears. Circles of gaiety, and places of revelry, are unsuited to you, if you would flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life. Associate with the people of God, and learn from them how they were brought to feel their sinfulness, and how they obtained mercy. Above all, *Pray for Divine illumination and help.* “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” Be candid

## *Serious Truths.*

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and submissive before the Almighty ; for “if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” You are sure to obtain Divine aid, if you sincerely and perseveringly ask for it. Inquire with Saul of Tarsus, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do.” Pray, now that you are alone with God. Let not one prayer suffice, but pray again and again ; and pray that the Holy Spirit may work in your soul due concern for salvation.

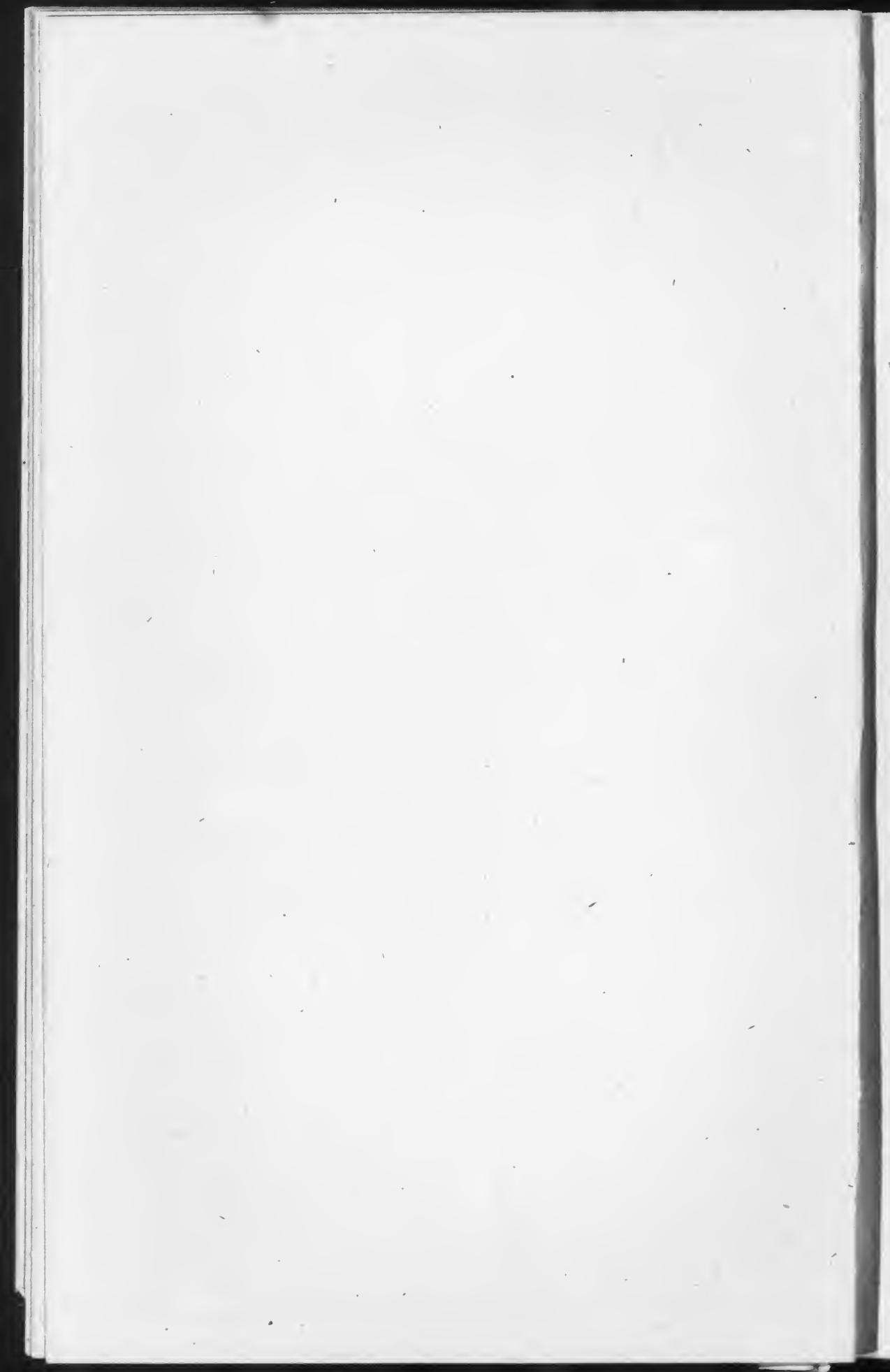


II.

## THE WAY OF SALVATION.

PLAINLY

SET FORTH.



# The Way of Salvation.

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Reader,

You are an Inquirer for Salvation; and you know the Divine requirements for this all-important object,—“Repentance toward God, and Faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.” But you desire to become more fully acquainted with the nature of Repentance, and with the way of Faith, so as to know, assuredly, what you are to do to be saved.

In order to this, it will be necessary to distinguish between things that differ, and to separate mere resemblance from reality.

Observe, then,

## ON THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE,

That it is not mere *regret for the commission of sin*. Most persons when they think of past sins feel regret. They see that sin has not been reasonable or profitable; and that however plausible or profitable sin appeared at the time

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it has not yielded either satisfaction or benefit. A sense of dishonour and shame is, more or less, in the minds of all who reflect on the sins of their life. Sin is seen to be unbecoming in rational and dependent beings. Then there are periods when the evil consequences of sin are so fully apparent that regret for its commission is very painfully felt; for though man's state on earth is not invariably what Job's friends set forth—a state of punishment for sin—yet a law of retribution is here in operation, and often asserts its power. A bystander may not observe this, when the sinner himself may see distinctly the link which connects sin and its punishment, as did the brethren of Joseph, when in Egypt they exclaimed in their trouble, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; *therefore* is this distress come upon us.” Pharaoh, when he beheld the destructive plagues upon Egypt, expressed regret for his conduct, which, no doubt, he felt at the time. Saul, the king, when he learned that the kingdom was to be rent from him, was the subject of deep regret. And the most hardened ruffian, on the discovery of his crimes, and when under the sentence of punishment, will regret his course. Indeed, regret for sin is the daily experience of

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most men, and cannot in itself be viewed as a sure sign of repentance.

Nor is *sadness*, or *sorrow*, to be confounded with repentance. Men may not only regret their sins ; they may, also, be deeply pained on account of them ; and yet not be truly penitent before God. Mortified pride, detection, and suffering, such as we have supposed, may constrain men to mourn over sin, and, withal, the consequences of sin, rather than the fact of sin itself, may be the real cause of sorrowful feeling. Besides, the emotions of sorrow are so different in different persons that they cannot be relied upon with safety. Some men have tears at command, and can weep for mere trifles : others cannot weep under the heaviest calamities. Sorrow, therefore, in its outward expression of sadness, exclamation, or tears, is not the sure criterion for repentance.

Nor is the *purpose of reformation and amendment* repentance. This, too, is common with mankind in their general reflections on sin, and on experiencing its consequences. Most men who live in sin think of forsaking it at some future, and more convenient time ; and thousands upon thousands of sinners commence each day, as it returns, with resolutions to act differently in it to what they did previously. Resolutions to forsake sin, and to be obedient

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to the Divine law, are among the most common passages of human experience, and are, in fact, the pastime of multitudes ; for they pass their time in such resolutions, and do nothing else. Indeed, this is the chief and most successful delusion of Satan with mankind at large. He does not tempt them to think of continuance in sin to the end of life. Such a temptation would be too fearful in its eternal results to be entertained. He leads them on from day to day, and from sin to sin, with the cherished purpose that they will act differently at some future period. To do evil seems necessary or profitable, *now* ; but let this desirable object be obtained, and that favourite purpose be fulfilled, then shall sin be abandoned, and amendment of life secured. Change of conduct is necessary. This is freely admitted by the adversary ; but "*not now*," he whispers : "at some future time :" shutting out from view the uncertainty of life, and an open grave, which may be within a single step of the sinner's onward course. This, therefore, the mere purpose of reformation and amendment, is not repentance.

What, then, is GENUINE REPENTANCE ? We have seen what it is not : let us now consider what it really is.

Repentance toward God is *heart-piercing*

## *Plainly set forth.*

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*conviction for sin.* It is not the mere sense of sin committed, such as we have named, but conviction of sin which pierces the inmost soul, inducing the anxious inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" It was thus with the repentant hearers of Peter on the day of Pentecost. "They were pricked in their heart" at the accusation of having crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, "and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It was thus with Saul of Tarsus when arrested by Christ on his way to Damascus, and when convinced of his sinfulness in persecuting the Church of God, he, "trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" It was thus with the Jailor at Philippi, when convinced of his sin and cruelty to the servants of the Lord, he "came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And it is thus with all real penitent seekers of salvation. They are thoroughly convinced of the evil and danger of sin, and they desire to know the way of deliverance. They may not all experience the agitation and alarm just named. Some may be gently and gradually enlightened, as was Lydia of Thyatira, whose heart the Lord opened. But all who experience repentance unto life are inwardly

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penetrated with a sense of guilt and condemnation. They feel that they have sinned against mercy, and love, and goodness—that their sin is the vilest ingratitude, for they have sinned against their best friend. They see and feel that sin is the abominable thing which God's soul hateth ; that life spent in sin is worse than wasted ; that it is prostituted to injurious objects ; and the conviction of all this enters fully into the soul.

Genuine repentance, while not to be safely estimated by regrets and tears, nevertheless has in it *deep, pungent sorrow for sin*. It may not, in all cases, wail and outwardly weep, but inwardly it laments and mourns. Poignant grief for ingratitude and disobedience to a God of love fills the soul of a real penitent, and in some instances he feels as though he could weep himself away in view of his sinfulness. He dwells upon sin, and its special aggravations, until he is penetrated with sorrow to the inmost depths of his nature, and until with bitterness of feeling he bemoans his condition. See this in the penitent DAVID, as set forth in the fifty-first Psalm ; and see how deeply he laments his state as a sinner, and how sorrowfully he dwells upon the circumstances of his great transgression. “My sin,” he says, “is ever before me.” Wherever he was: whether in

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his palace alone, or abroad among his people,—whether rising up or lying down,—his sin was painfully in remembrance. “Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight : that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.” He did not attempt to excuse or palliate sin on the ground of natural inclination to it, but views this as aggravating his offensive and polluted appearance before God. “Behold,” he exclaims, “I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” . . . “Purge me with hyssop,” he prays, “and I shall be clean : wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness : that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.” SAUL of TARSUS spent three days and three nights, with fasting and prayer, bemoaning his state as a sinner, and imploring forgiveness. And, in the New Testament, gospel penitents are spoken of as “broken-hearted.” All may not have the strong emotional feelings which some experience, but all repentant sinners mourn for sin with sorrow that is unfeigned. A sense of Divine goodness smites the heart. The view of Christ’s sufferings and death bows down the soul to the dust. To have sinned against infinite goodness and love ; to have

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despised a crucified Saviour ; and to have still, after all such ingratitude and rebellion, mercy and grace freely offered. The consideration of all this dissolves man's nature, and makes him contrite.

Real repentance, however, is the *resolute turning from sin to keep the commandments of God*. It not only purposes reformation and amendment, but enters upon it, and with full determination to accomplish it. This is, in fact, the scriptural meaning of its own term, Repentance—change in mind and conduct. “Godly sorrow,” declares St. Paul, “*worketh* repentance.” This is the result of sorrow’s operation in the soul. It is not repentance itself, but it leads to and produces the change from sin to obedience. This change is the Divine test of penitence. “Cease to do evil, learn to do well.”

...“Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” “Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgression ; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.” “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your

## *Plainly set forth.*

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sins may be blotted out." And this change is the only sure sign of repentance. Who would deem a child truly sorrowful for disobedience if he wilfully continued in it? The Prodigal must not only mourn over his perishing condition in the far country, but he must also arise and come to his Father. Real repentance is turning from all sin to keep the commandments of God. It makes no reserve. It leaves all to follow Christ. The right eye, and the right hand, are sacrificed, if necessary. *All* sin, however pleasurable, or however profitable, is forsaken, and respect is had to all the Divine commandments. It is true, that until renewed by the Holy Ghost, sin will not be successfully overcome. Until that inward and spiritual change be accomplished, the penitent sinner will groan under the bondage of a sinful nature, and confess, "the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." This very conflict with sin, and fighting against it, is proof of a change. There would be no such conflict if the disposition was for evil.

But repentance, it must be remembered, is not of itself efficacious to salvation. Genuine, thorough, and reforming as it may be, it cannot atone for sin, or merit forgiveness. Amendment of life does not compensate for past offences, any more than the payment of

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all just demands in future would defray debts already contracted. Perfect obedience in all time to come would have no surplus merit to cover past delinquency. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." What, then, do you ask, shall be done? Am I left wholly without help?

No: God himself points out help for you. He proclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." His word declares that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus "tasted death for every man." "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." ATONEMENT FOR SIN is required. That has been fully made in the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ: He has borne the penalty due to our sins, and has fully satisfied the demands of infinite justice. "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. . . . The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." He has magnified the law and made it honourable in man's forgiveness; and "we have redemption

## *Plainly set forth.*

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through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Full satisfaction having thus been given, God can be just and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus. He now justifieth the ungodly.. Personal acceptance and appropriation of Christ’s atonement, however, is required of the sinner; for he is a free agent, and may, or may not avail himself of God’s righteous method of saving sinners. And to every inquiring penitent, the answer is, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

What, then, is the Faith which connects us with the atoning merit of Christ? and which instrumentally justifies us before God, so that we are pardoned and accepted by Him?

### **WHAT IS SAVING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST?**

It is not mere belief of what is related in the Scriptures concerning Him. Few persons in our country doubt the truthfulness of Holy Scripture concerning the Saviour. The nation at large avows its belief in all the essential articles of Christian truth, and readily subscribes to that venerated form of sound words, called “the Apostles’ Creed.” But with all this open avowal of faith, how few, comparatively, are saved! Multitudes around us, who have no doubt of the truth of the Christian Revelation, show by their daily life and conduct that they are “in the

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gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Belief of Scripture records concerning Christ is essential to faith; but saving faith is more than this; for thousands have this faith, and are not saved.

Saving Faith in Christ is not *mere general belief in Him as the Saviour of sinners*; for this too, is the faith of many who are unsaved. They intelligently and firmly believe that He was sent from God to redeem mankind; that by suffering and death He has made full atonement for sin; and that He is able, also, to save all to the uttermost who come unto God by Him. This belief, however, as in the former case, is mere credence, and may be possessed by devils in their unrelieved misery, as well as by unsaved men. It is the mere assent of the understanding to that which is credible, and which is seen to be true.

Saving Faith in Christ, is *personal reliance upon Him for a present salvation*. It is not the mere belief that He is the all-sufficient Saviour of mankind, but it is the actual committal of the soul to Him for salvation *now*. Saving Faith is *Trust, Confidence, Reliance*. It is the act of the *heart*, as well as of the mind; for "with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." Saving Faith in Christ realizes His Divine presence, though unseen by the bodily eye,

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and commits the soul to Him with sure trust in His power and willingness now to save. "Faith," says the Apostle St. Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" and the penitent believer, as fully confides in Christ for salvation, as he would if he saw Him in the flesh. Saving Faith is not only the *eye*, which intellectually looks to Christ, and the *feet*, which obediently move to Him, but also the *hand* which lays hold of Christ, and which hangs upon Him for salvation. It is receiving and embracing Christ with loving trust as the Saviour of the soul; for "to as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." It is not the presumptuous, unwarrantable act recommended by some over-zealous counsellors, who say, "Believe that you are saved, and you *are* saved." To believe this is to believe what is not; and Jehovah will never justify a sinner on the ground of falsehood. Man believes in order to salvation. Faith is its *instrumental means*, and is a reasonable service. Faith is not presumption. It is not a cold process of the understanding, which seizes hold of the *mere letter* of God's word and says—"Well: I am told, 'believe and be saved,' and therefore I will conclude that I *am* saved. If I *only* believe, I

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am safe. I have no more to do." No: true faith does not impel the soul to forge its certificate for heaven. It cries out, "Lord, Thou hast died for me, and I want to experience the benefit of Thy precious death. Lord, I will cry out that Thou art the Saviour, until I feel that Thou art *my* Saviour. I know, intellectually, that Thou hast tasted death for every man; but I wait, and *will* wait, till I know it, though it be to the end of my life—that Thou hast tasted death for *me*. Give me to know it by heartfelt experience. I *will* believe—I *do* believe—I *now* believe—Lord give me to *feel* that Thou hast saved me." And in thus persevering to come to Christ, and to cling to the direction, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," the soul is sure to experience not only full belief, but also the full *assurance* of faith. In thus coming to Christ, and trusting in Him, the soul believes, not that God *has* saved, but that God does *now* save, according to His gracious word,—"Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." When we pray, said Jesus, we are to believe that we receive the things we ask, and we shall have them. That is, not believe we have already received the things we ask, but believe *now*—even while we ask, that we receive them. Thus saving

## *Plainly set forth.*

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Faith is trust and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ as able and willing to save now.

The GOSPEL NARRATIVES, which are intended to instruct and encourage us in the way of faith, show this with certainty. They teach us that where trust in Christ was wanting benefits were withheld ; and that where confiding faith was exercised benefits were bestowed.

Read, for instance, St. Mark's narrative of the DISTRESSED FATHER'S application to Christ on behalf of his lunatic son, who was so sorely rent and torn by the devil, and who was in constant danger of death. (ix. 14—29.) The Apostles, left in the valley under the Mount of Transfiguration, had failed in their attempt to cast out the evil spirit from the child ; and when our Lord returned to them, the half despairing parent besought Him, saying, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us !" Jesus rejected the doubting prayer, and said, "*If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.*" As if He had said, There is no doubt of my power : the doubt is of thy faith. Only trust in Me, and all things desired shall be bestowed. "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe ;" but, fearing the effect of any lingering unbelief upon his son, he added, "help Thou my unbelief ;"

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when the Almighty Saviour at once commanded the deaf and dumb spirit to come out of him, and never to enter him more.

Read St. Mark's account of the diseased LEPER, who came forth from his polluted hut into the Saviour's presence, and kneeling down, said, with confiding faith, "If Thou wilt, Thou *canst* make me clean." "I *will*," said Jesus, instantly; "be thou clean." (i. 40—42.)

Read St. Matthew's account of the WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD, who in the fulness of her confidence said within herself, "If I may but touch His garment I *shall* be whole;" and to whom the Saviour said, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." (ix. 20—22.)

Read St. Matthew's narrative of the SYRO-PHENICIAN MOTHER, who besought Christ on behalf of her daughter grievously vexed with a devil. At first He was silent, and answered her not a word. Then He replied in the language of a contemptuous Jew, saying, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." "'Truth, Lord,' she responded; 'it is not meet; and I do not seek to deprive the Jews of their apportioned blessings; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' I am a poor, undeserving, Gentile dog; and I only ask for the dog's por-

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tion—a crumb, compared with the abundant blessings Thou hast to bestow.” “Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” (Matt. xv. 21—28.)

In some instances, it will be remembered, Jesus spake *comparatively* of faith. He declared, for example, that the faith of the Centurion was greater faith than any found in Israel. In what appeared the surpassing greatness of the Centurion’s faith? In believing that Jesus could heal by a word and at a distance. He had applied for relief on behalf of his servant; and the Saviour sent the message, “I will come and heal him.” The Centurion replied that he did not require such marked attention, and that he was not worthy to have so distinguished a personage under his roof, but that if the Lord would speak the word where He was, the servant would be healed; and he illustrated this by his own authority over soldiers under him. “When Jesus heard it, he marvelled,” and expressing his admiration of the Gentile captain’s faith, as greater than any He had found among His own people, the Jews, He said. “Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” The greatness of his faith was in unwavering trust and confidence in Christ’s almighty good-

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ness. "Lord," said Martha and Mary, who belonged to the house of Israel, "if Thou hadst *been here*, our brother had not died." The Centurion did not consider it necessary for Jesus to be in his house to heal his servant. (Matt. viii. 5—13.)

Thus it plainly appears from Scripture teaching that Faith in Christ, which He accepts and honours, is trust and reliance upon Him.

And this trust is *Man's own act*. It is the effect of Divine operation in the soul; and, in that sense, is the gift of God; but in its energetic putting forth, and confiding reliance, it is the voluntary effort of the believing soul itself, strengthened and confirmed by the power of the Holy Spirit. See this truth illustrated in the case of the MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND. Jesus said to him at once, as he stood forth obedient to command, "Stretch forth thine hand!" He did not reply, "Lord, I cannot do so. My arm is dead and powerless; and to stretch forth my hand is the very strength I lack." He made the effort; and He who issued the command gave power to obey; for while the man endeavoured to stretch forth his hand, health and vigour flowed into the dead, cold limb, and "his hand was restored whole as the other." (Mark iii. 1—5.) It is thus with penitent sinners *trying* to believe. In the effort

## *Plainly set forth.*

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personally made by them to obey the Divine command, and to believe in the Son of God, strength is communicated, enabling them to do so, and they are saved through faith.

And that *instantly*. The moment the penitent sinner believes in Christ, that moment he is saved. As soon as ZACCHEUS receives the Saviour, and gives proof of his repentance, it is declared, "This day is salvation come to this house." Immediately on seeing the faith of the helpless PARALYTIC, and of his friends who let him down through the roof and the tiling, Jesus said, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." The MURDERERS OF CHRIST, when pricked in the heart with piercing conviction of their enormous criminality, were not directed by Peter to perform a round of preparatory duties before they could be saved, but were at once exhorted to repent and make confession of their faith ; and on that very day they were baptized and added to the Church. The alarmed and trembling JAILOR AT PHILIPPI, on his agonizing inquiry, "What must I do to be saved ?" was not exhorted to prayer and fasting for the improvement of his character. The apostolic direction was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ;" and in that very midnight hour of his conviction, he believed, was baptized, and rejoiced in

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God his Saviour. It is so still. The moment of faith is the moment of salvation.

And with salvation ASSURANCE of it is given. This might be inferred from the very nature of the case itself; for being reconciled, enmity ceases; and as the apostle declares, “Being justified by faith, we *have* peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Archdeacon Paley has observed, in his own forcible manner, “A man might as soon forget the day of his deliverance from shipwreck as forget the day of his salvation;” and if the fact is to be thus signally remembered, it must be known. Assurance is first given by the Holy Spirit to the believer’s soul that he is forgiven and accepted through Christ; for “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we *are* the children of God.” “Because ye *are* sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father.’” This direct and immediate assurance by the Holy Spirit is confirmed and corroborated by His work within the believer’s soul; for when saved, the believer is not only justified, or pardoned,—and not only adopted into the family of God,—but he is regenerated—born of the Spirit—made a new creature in Christ Jesus; so that he has spiritual dispositions, and spiritual power. Feeling that God loves him, he loves God in return.

## *Plainly set forth.*

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The believer knows that he has passed from death unto life, because he loves the brethren. He knows that they who are born of God do not commit sin. Though conscious of innumerable imperfections and infirmities, yet he does not willingly do that which is evil ; and strengthened by the Spirit's might in the inner man, he rejoicingly declares, " Sin hath not dominion over us ; for we are not under the law, but under grace."

But, READER, seek not the evidences of salvation before salvation itself. The tree must be planted before the fruits appear. The fountain must be opened before the streams branch forth. To be saved is more than assurance and enjoyment. If not a single spark of peace or joy were to be kindled within your soul on this side of eternity, yet, *if saved*, the chief object of faith would be realized. Seek salvation, simply and directly, by faith in Jesus Christ, and the effects will assuredly follow. Remember ! it is not promised, He that *feeleth* shall be saved, but he that *believeth*. With confiding, trustful, relying faith, then, go at once to the Saviour, saying, " Lord, I am a guilty, condemned, perishing sinner ; but Thou hast suffered and died for me, and hast thereby made full atonement for all my sins. I forsake

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all sin, and thankfully receive Thee now as my Saviour and Lord, joyfully consecrating all I am and all I have to Thy service ; and this I do without any reliance upon my repentance and obedience :

‘In my hand no price I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.’ ”

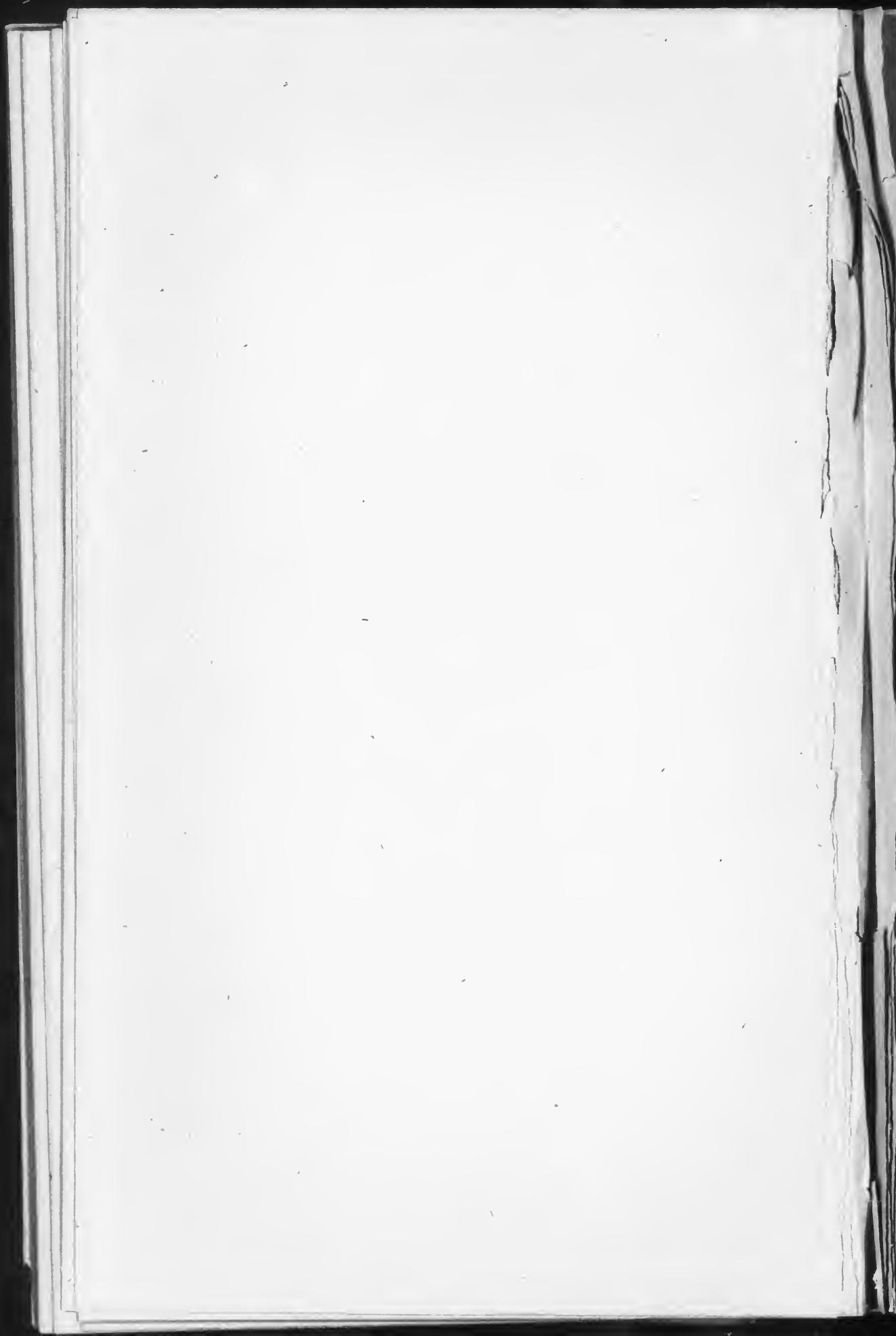


III.

FULL ASSURANCE

FOR THE

CHILDREN OF GOD.



## FULL ASSURANCE.

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Reader,

Do you ask, CAN I KNOW, ASSUREDLY IN THIS LIFE, THAT I AM A CHILD OF GOD? Then you ask the most momentous question that can be proposed by a human being. For upon the answer to this inquiry depends all that is most truly important to you, both for time and eternity. If you be in doubt of your filial relationship to the Divine Being, there is no vital spring of love within your soul, and, consequently, you can render Him no cheerful obedience. If you be in doubt of your acceptance with God, you can really feel no confident approach to Him in prayer; no childlike submission to Him in suffering; and no joyous anticipation of the heavenly inheritance He has provided for His children. So that the question you ask involves, not a mere theory which may be left to theologians to express with precision and accuracy, but all that is essential

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and transforming in the Christian character ; and which, therefore, belongs to all who are concerned for their spiritual and everlasting welfare. Assurance of salvation, if attainable, is not only a privilege but a positive duty, which cannot be neglected without peril and detriment to the soul.

The HOLY SCRIPTURES are clear and explicit in their teaching on this question ; and most satisfactorily show, that anxious and distressing fears need not remain upon the believer's mind concerning it. Considering the weighty interests involved, it might be reasonably presumed, that a God of love would not leave His children in doubt, or uncertainty, respecting their spiritual relation to Him. Nor has He done so ; but has plainly taught us in His holy word, that full assurance of His favour may in this probationary state be possessed and enjoyed.

To be satisfied of this, it will be necessary to take a broad and general view of Scripture teaching on this subject, and not to confine ourselves to a narrow and microscopic examination of isolated texts. The tenor of Divine revelation must, in the first instance, be considered, that we may see how the particular items of teaching agree with the whole. And in taking this general view, it is evident

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that the Scripture representation of religion is not that of timidity, fearfulness, and bondage, but of *confidence, joyousness, and freedom*. The Divine commands, invitations, and promises, as well as the recorded lives and examples of God's servants, show that it was the design of the Almighty Father, to make His children happy in this life, as well as in the life to come.

Solomon's personification of religion, under the honoured name of "Wisdom," is not that of sadness and gloom, but of cheerfulness and joy. He does not depict her as going forth with melancholy countenance, and robed in mourning weeds, but as the very queen of beauty and excellence, dispensing blessings on the right hand and on the left, as she treads her peaceful and pleasant ways among mankind. "She is a tree of life," expressly declares the Royal Preacher, "to them that lay hold upon her; and *happy* is every one that retaineth her." "Wisdom," he adds, in his varied pictures and illustrations of her festive character and entertainments, "hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table." Isaiah, too, in his rapturous prophecy, proclaims "a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, well refined,"

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## *Full Assurance.*

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prepared on the mountain of God's Church for His people; and the exultant Seer bids Zion cry out and shout, because great is the Holy One in the midst of her.

Our Lord pictured the salvation of the Gospel as a royal marriage-feast, to which all classes, even the poor and the lame in the streets and lanes of the city, and the unsheltered outcasts in the highways and hedges, are freely and earnestly invited by His servants. He expressly forbids sorrowful anxiety in His disciples for the provisions of earth, reminding them of God's paternal care over them, beyond what he extends to the birds of the air and to the flowers of the field. And when He saw them inwardly distressed at the thought of His departure from them, He said, with affectionate concern, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The Saviour did not command men to bow with cringing dread at the footstool of their Maker, but to kneel before Him with filial confidence, and say, "OUR FATHER which art in heaven." He repeated this paternal name so frequently for the Divine

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Being, that it has become a household word throughout Christendom, and as familiar as it is endearing. He gave, as His parting benediction, PEACE to His disciples. His last promise to them was the Holy Ghost, as the abiding COMFORTER. On His return from the grave, He showed them His hands and His feet; and as they gazed with streaming eyes upon the wounds of the nails and the spear in His risen body, again He pronounced for them PEACE. His last act towards them was an act of blessing; and breathing upon them, before He ascended from Olivet to heaven, He said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." On the Spirit's descent at Pentecost, the disciples were so joyful that it was said they were "full of new wine." The first converts to Christianity "ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people." And when scattered abroad by persecution through different regions, having suffered the loss of all things, it was enjoined upon them by Apostolic authority, to "Rejoice always," to "rejoice in tribulation, also;" and to "rejoice evermore."

Thus, the Scripture representations of religion, throughout, are not of gloom and servile fear, but of confidence and joy. This confident and joyous state, however, cannot be had with-

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out assurance of Divine favour. If at all apprehensive of condemnation, there can be no inward serenity ; no ways of peace and pleasantness ; no feast of fat things ; and no rejoicing in the Lord. If doubtful of filial relation to God, there can be no filial joy in his paternal love.

SCRIPTURE EXAMPLES of human character support this general view of the joyous nature of religion ; and show, that from the beginning, good men have rejoiced in the assurance of the Divine favour. Abel, the first martyr for the Truth, "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." "Enoch walked with God ;" and "before his translation, had this testimony that he pleased God." To Noah, the Almighty said, "Thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." Abraham was called the "friend of God," and had repeated manifestations of Divine acceptance. Job, under his severe and accumulated sufferings, and when reproached by all, even by the wife of his bosom, exclaimed, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another ; though my reins be consumed within me."

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Moses spake with God face to face, and upon the ground that he had found favour in His sight pleaded for mercy to Israel. David, habitually rejoiced in conscious relationship to the Divine Being. "O God!" he said, "Thou art *my* God; early will I seek Thee." Jehovah was *his* rock, *his* portion, *his* refuge, *his* dwelling-place. "The Lord," he sang confidently, "*is my* Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth *me* in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." When through unfaithfulness he had lost the sense of God's favour, he prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." And when recounting the signal mercies of his life, for earnest praise and blessing before the Lord, he specifically named forgiveness of sins, exclaiming, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." Isaiah sang, "O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." The prophet Habakkuk, apprehending the deepest deprivations, and the loss of all temporal provisions, resolved, "Although the fig tree shall not

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blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of *my* salvation.”

The New-Testament saints are described as being filled with the Holy Ghost, and as rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. St. Paul affirmed, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” And the Apostle St. John exultantly avers of himself, and of those to whom he wrote, “Beloved, now *are we* the sons of God.” So that Scripture teaching on Religious Assurance is plain and consistent throughout. It inculcates confidence and joy in the Lord by precept ; and supports and illustrates it by example.

WE now inquire, HOW THIS FULL AND SATISFACTORY ASSURANCE IS TO BE OBTAINED ?

The answer to this inquiry is, *By the Holy Spirit's direct and personal testimony to the soul of the penitent believer that he is a child of God.* The Scriptures affirm this positively, and unequivocally. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

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(Romans viii. 16.) "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Galatians iv. 6.) These, and other passages which might be quoted, declare that the assurance given to the believer is by the Holy Spirit, personally and immediately, and not by intermediate means. It is the Spirit *itself* who attests the fact of filial relationship to the soul. And the necessity of this is evident. Adoption into the family of God is an act of the Divine mind, and cannot, unless Divinely communicated, be known by man. "No man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." And if the fact of adoption be made known, it must be directly and immediately by the Spirit. It cannot be, in the first instance, by the fruit of the Spirit appearing in the life; for when first born of God, there is no fruit of the Spirit to be seen. Love, for example, which is expressly declared to be the fruit of the Spirit, has no existence, until produced with the sense of God's love to the believer. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, then, and not till then, is the experience declared by the Apostle, "We love Him, because He first loved us." No broken-hearted penitent would

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in his repentance, faith, and obedience, find reason for full assurance of Divine favour. There would be seen by him, such defects in repentance, such weakness in faith, and such imperfections in obedience, that he would find no sufficient ground for joyful confidence in God as his Father. And it may be affirmed, in the very nature of things, that no person can, without the testimony of the Holy Spirit, rejoice in the Lord with filial love and confidence.

To give this assurance to God's adopted children is the Holy Spirit's office and mission. He is expressly called the SPIRIT OF ADOPTION; and is declared to be personally in the believer, producing within him the cry of filial love. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." And then immediately follows the text quoted, "The Spirit itself,"—the Spirit of Adoption whom ye have received—"beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Thus it appears, that to assure believers in Christ that they are the children of God, is the specific work and office of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord expressly promised Him in the character of the *Comforter*, to His disciples, and that in place of *Himself*. Jesus gave full assurance of salvation to them that believed in the days of His flesh. "Son," said

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He to the helpless paralytic, "be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee." Of the woman that was a sinner, He declared to Simon the Pharisee, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven;" and to herself He said, "Thy sins are forgiven." He assured His disciples of His own and of His Father's love to them. And if the Holy Spirit take the place of Christ, as the other Comforter, He must assure believers of their acceptance with God. This He does as the Spirit of Adoption, by His own direct and immediate testimony. He stamps upon their souls the Divine impression, and gives them the pledge and foretaste of what they shall possess and enjoy in the heavenly state,—as the Apostle St. Paul declares, when he says, "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest of our inheritance* until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." (Eph. i. 13, 14.) Believers in Christ "have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that they may *know* the things which are freely given to them of God." (I. Cor. ii. 12.) And having this Spirit dwelling in them as an abiding Comforter, they "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they have now received the atonement." They "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

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It is no valid objection to this Scripture doctrine of the Holy Spirit's witness within man, that the mode of His operation is unknown. The Saviour Himself reminds us that a fact may be indisputably known, and yet the mode of its production be incomprehensible. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," says He, "and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We know not how mind acts upon mind in human agency; but of the fact that it does so none can doubt. And the Holy Spirit's operation in the soul, by which He personally and immediately attests the believer's filial relationship to the Divine Being, may well remain an incomprehensible mystery.

This much may be observed of the Spirit's attestation, that it is not by an audible voice from heaven, such as was heard concerning Christ at His baptism, declaring, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Nor is it by any inward voice. It is not by supernatural visions and outward manifestations; but by a direct and immediate impression upon the soul by the Spirit of Adoption, through which such joyous assurance of acceptance is given, that the filial cry of Abba, Father, is produced within it. Assurance of the Divine

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favour is not produced by external means and signs, though it may be in the use of the appointed means of grace; and, usually, is so. It may be in hearing the Word, as with converts on the day of Pentecost. It may be in reading the Scriptures, as with the Ethiopian eunuch, who, after he had believed, went on his way rejoicing. It may be in secret or public prayer. It may be "in thoughts from the visions of the night." In a word, we ought not to limit the Holy One, as to means. But, whatever may be the variety of means and secondary agencies employed, assurance itself is given by the Spirit's direct and personal testimony to the soul of the believer, that his sins are forgiven, and that he is a child of God.

While, however, the precise mode of the Spirit's operation, in attesting the believer's acceptance, cannot be defined, yet there are some immediate effects of that attestation to be noted. He removes, by His Divine testimony, the distressing sense of condemnation from the mind. Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, at the sight of the cross, the believer feels that his burden falls off, and is lost in the sepulchre of oblivion. Assured of reconciliation by the Spirit, peace diffuses itself through the soul, and resting in calm composure upon the Saviour, the believer says, "My beloved is mine, and I am His."

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Yea, joy in the Holy Ghost is the happy and immediate result in the believer's soul. Sometimes, when deliverance is sudden and signal, there is a wondering rapture which "fills the mouth with laughter, and the tongue with singing;" but the soul afterwards subsides into settled, confiding peace. This order of feeling is in accordance with the order of the Spirit's fruit, given by St. Paul, where he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, faith." (Gal. v. 22.) And with joy and peace through believing, there is, not unfrequently, a glad and happy sense of new life, by which it is inwardly felt, that old things have passed away, and all things become new. Cowper, the poet, relates of his overpowering sensations at the time of his conversion, "Unless the Almighty had been under me, I think I should have been overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. My eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport. I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder." But the work of the Spirit is best described in St. Peter's own words,—it is "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Mr. Wesley records, that when he was enabled to believe in Christ as his Saviour, under the reading of Luther's Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, at about a quarter

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before nine, in Aldersgate-Street, that he felt his heart strangely warmed within him ; that he felt he did trust in Christ alone for salvation ; and that there and then assurance was given him that Jesus had taken away all his sins, even *his*, and saved him from the law of sin and death. And the Rev. Peter Jones, a converted Indian Chief, from America, when in this country—after describing his pierced and wounded condition, under conviction for sin, as a stricken deer who left the herd to die—said of the sensations of new life experienced by him on the day of his salvation, “On that day the world seemed all fresh and new to me. It seemed like a new creation. I looked around, and the trees and the fields were so green—the lake was so blue—the sun shine so bright—the sky was so glad. O, that was a handsome day on which God for Christ’s sake forgave my sins !” These sensations, whether of peace which passeth all understanding, or of joy unspeakable and full of glory, are the effects of the Holy Spirit’s witness in the believer’s soul that he is a child of God.

The Divine testimony may not always be borne with equal strength and vividness. There is diversity in the Spirit’s operations ; and, apart from God’s sovereignty, there are differences in the character, temperament, and

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circumstances of mankind, to account for different degrees of assurance. Some men fear the Lord from their youth, and are gradually brought out of darkness into light. Others, in mature and advanced life, are suddenly snatched as brands from the burning. Some are timid and fearful in disposition: others are bold and venturesome. Some are naturally gloomy and sorrowful: others are cheerful and buoyant. Some experience a long night of weeping: others believe in the self-same hour of their repentance. Upon some, the light of Divine favour dawns gradually, strengthening as it shines, until it brightens into day: in others, light suddenly bursts upon them from heaven, with a brightness above the sun shining in his strength. Some are physically weak and infirm; and their whole nervous system is shattered and tremulous: others are healthful and strong, both in body and in mind. Some have constant accumulation of afflictions and sorrows, and seem to have all things against them: others are continuously prosperous. These, and other considerations, may serve much to explain the difference of degrees of assurance in different believers. No uniform standard of the effects of the Spirit's attestation can be required. In some, it may produce the liveliest emotions, and fill the soul with heavenly rap-

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ture : in others, it may produce holy peace and settled calm. In some it may be softened and subdued by views of the holiness of God, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin : in others, it may be heightened by feelings of Divine mercy. But in all ordinary cases, where no bodily hindrances prevent the enjoyments of the soul, all sense of condemnation will pass away, and a consciousness of filial relationship be felt.

This doctrine of the Holy Ghost's witness may be abused. But man's liability to abuse the gift does not lessen the value of the gift itself, or the certainty of the fact that it can be enjoyed. All Scripture doctrines are liable to abuse ; and the more important the doctrine, the more liable it is to be abused. The doctrine of Justification by Faith was abused by men in apostolic times, who made void the law ; and it has since been abused by Antinomians, as well as by Romanists. But this doctrine of the Spirit's testimony has been carefully guarded by Inspiration ; so that its reality and truth may be practically tested and proved by the graces and fruits of the Spirit in the believer's character and life. There is a *joint* and *concurrent* testimony to man's adoption spoken of by the Apostle, when he says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness *with* our spirit, that we are the children of God."

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By our *own spirit* is to be understood our conscience, which is sometimes called our heart. "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." Divine Revelation furnishes specific marks and signs of the children of God, from which, on self-examination, he who has received the Spirit's testimony, may prove its reality from his dispositions and conduct. For instance, love to God, is set forth as a mark of filial relationship. The believer feels that he loves God; "therefore," he says, "I am a child of God." Love to the brethren is another mark. The believer feels that he loves all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; therefore, he concludes, "I am a child of God." Power over the world, and over sin, is another mark of the regenerate. "I do not love the world; I do not wilfully commit sin," says the believer, "and, therefore, I am a child of God." Thus, by self-examination before the law of the Lord,—conscience meanwhile accusing or excusing,—the believer in Christ ascertains his true character. And thus, where the Holy Spirit's testimony of adoption has been really received, the dispositions and life answer

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to the Divine requirements : by the conjoint testimony of two witnesses—the witness of the Spirit of God, and the witness of our own spirit,—full assurance is obtained. The witness of the Spirit will be, in the first instance, *to* our spirit ; and afterwards, when His fruits are examined, it will be *with* our spirit. The former witness, true and positive ; and the latter, evident and confirmatory.

Such is the teaching of Holy Scripture on the doctrine of Assurance by the Spirit. And, as might be supposed, this doctrine has been held by the Church from the beginning. Our LORD, and His Apostles, taught it ; and early converts to Christianity rejoiced in it, as we have seen. This was not a gift of the apostolic age, only. It is not classed by inspiration among the extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Spirit, but is set forth by it as a privilege belonging to all believers in Christ, and that whether they be Jews or Gentiles. The early Fathers of the Christian Church, taught and professed it. Protestants of the Reformation held the doctrine of Assurance by the Spirit ; while, as evidently undermining the dogma of priestly intervention and absolution for the souls of men, it was formally condemned by the Council of Trent. Martin Luther, in his commentary on the text quoted from Galatians iv. 6,

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writes, “Let us assure ourselves that God sendeth the Holy Ghost into our hearts. This I say to confute that pernicious doctrine of the papists, which taught that no man certainly knows whether he be in the favour of God, or no.” The Church of England leads her people publicly to declare, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” Her Homilies teach that “a true faith is a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that, by the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God;” and, further, that “godly men feel inwardly God’s Holy Spirit inflaming their hearts with love.” Hence, Bishops, and eminent expounders in that Church, have set it forth plainly and positively. Bishops Reynolds, Pearson, and Andrews,—Richard Hooker, Dr. Isaac Barrow, and many others, have done so. The Presbyterians and Puritans, from Calvin downwards, have taught it. John Bunyan, the Church’s Allegorist, speaks of three shining ones coming to Pilgrim at the cross, and saluting him with “Peace.” The first shining one he describes as saying to him, “Thy sins be forgiven thee;” the second, as stripping him of his rags, and clothing him with a change of raiment; and the third, as setting a mark upon his forehead, and giving him a roll with a seal upon it; which roll, or inward assurance, Chris-

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tian lost in “pleasant harbour,” where in un-watchfulness he slept at noonday. Wesley and Whitfield preached this doctrine of the Spirit’s witness, freely and fully; and their preaching was attended by spiritual signs and wonders, unexampled in modern times. Increasing thousands in successive generations, down to the present period, have professed this Divine assurance, and have rejoiced in it, both in life and in death. And whenever any great revival of the work of God occurs, the fact of the Spirit’s testimony being received by converts, is always made prominent. Thus, this doctrine of the Holy Spirit’s witness to the heart of the believer, is not new, as some have set forth. It is as old as the work of God in the souls of men; and has been known and held in the Church from the beginning.

But it will be asked, *What of those Christian professors who have not this Assurance? Are they all to be excluded from the spiritual Church of Christ?* We judge them not: to their own Master they stand or fall. They may be defective in knowledge; and being defective in knowledge, they will be defective in faith; and defective in faith, they will be defective in assurance; for in this respect, as in others, “according to their faith it will be done unto them.” Not having the “full assurance of understanding,”

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they have not the “full assurance of faith;” and not having the full assurance of faith, they have not the “full assurance of hope.” Some minds, as we have already noted, are overclouded by physical weakness and infirmity; for there is close and intimate sympathy between the body and the soul; and the mechanism of both the inward and outward man is delicate and complicated beyond comprehension. Some persons are naturally timid, and shrink from positive conclusions on almost every question. They are so in the duties and services of life, and may well be expected to be so in the faith and hope of the Gospel. Others live in a low and lukewarm state; and being neither hot nor cold, they are necessarily in doubt and uncertainty of their acceptance with God. Some are daily immersed in business and public engagements, taking no time for communion with the Divine Being, and, therefore, have no “communion of the Holy Ghost.” By neglect of known duty,—by covetousness and worldliness, they grieve the Holy Spirit by whom they have been sealed; and, consequently, they walk in darkness, and see no light. Others cherish sins which they secretly indulge, and refuse to take up their cross of self-denial and suffering for Christ. To give assurance of His favour, by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, God will be served with dove-

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like simplicity, which does not stoop to acts of self-love. Wrong tempers—such as fretfulness, anger, pride, envy—if allowed, will weaken and erase the Spirit's testimony from the soul. These, and many other causes, might be named, for the lack of full assurance of salvation. But where there is sure trust in Christ for salvation, and godly simplicity in endeavouring to follow the Lord fully, the witness of the Spirit is possessed and enjoyed. It may not always be spoken of by believers under the name of "full assurance." It may be described as a "comfortable hope," or as a "prevailing persuasion," or as "confidence in God;" but with inward meltings of soul, fellowship with the Father and the Son, and delight in the Lord, there is in effect, what is meant by assurance of salvation; for, as we have seen, without the testimony of the Spirit there can be no filial approach to the Divine Being, and, consequently, no delight in Him.

READER, seek this full assurance by the Spirit for yourself. It is your undoubted privilege to possess and enjoy it. You need not live in doubt and uncertainty concerning your acceptance with God. Our Heavenly Father would have all His children happy and joyful with the assurance of His love. He does not

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impose upon them the spirit of bondage again to fear, but imparts to them the Spirit of Adoption, by which they cry, Abba, Father. It is not for any one to say that it is safer, and more promotive of humility, to indulge hope, rather than profess assurance, when assurance is a blessing provided in the economy of grace for believers in Christ. Think not of living below your privilege in this respect, any more than in any other. Consider how much depends upon your filial relation to God, both for time and eternity: not only filial love, filial confidence, and filial obedience, but, also, filial heirship for an everlasting inheritance; for "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." See to it, then, that your title to heaven be clear and certain.

Do you inquire how this may be? The answer is, *By faith in the Saviour.* "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," says the Apostle, St. Paul. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," says St. John. And again, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Then, let there be simple, implicit faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Saviour, and you shall become a child of God; and becoming a child of God, you shall receive

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the Spirit of Adoption, whereby, or *by whom*, you shall cry, confidently, "Abba, Father." Salvation, from first to last, is through Jesus, the Son of God. Then, with faith in His blood, seek to know that *you* are forgiven and saved; and the seal of the Holy Ghost shall be upon *you*, affording satisfactory assurance that *you* are a child of God. Leave the manner of the Spirit's coming to Himself. Let Him come suddenly, as a rushing mighty wind, or gradually, and softly, as the distilling dew. Let Him come in the violent shock of the earthquake, or with the still small voice. Let Him shine at once upon the soul with noonday brightness, or let Him rise at first upon it with faint and glimmering light. Let Him fill you with spiritual rapture, so that you shall cry out and shout aloud in the overpowering manifestation of His saving mercy, or let Him progressively diffuse peace through your mind. Only wait for Him in faith, believing that God will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask for it; and though He tarry, yet He will come, and ultimately fill you with joy and peace through believing.

And having received the Spirit of Adoption, be careful to *retain His presence and testimony*. It is not once for all that He witnesses to the believer that he is a child of God. He is the

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abiding Comforter, who dwells in the accepted believer as in a temple. "The Spirit itself *beareth* witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The Divine Witness continues, and remains. The Spirit of Adoption, sent into the heart, *crieth* Abba, Father. The cry of filial confidence is not to cease. The chief question for one who has been adopted into God's family is not what he once was, but what he is now. "Am I, at this moment, a child of God?" The Spirit of God may be grieved, vexed, yea quenched. His presence may depart, and His light be extinguished. To retain His presence and witness, there must be circumspection, prayer, and persevering diligence in the use of the appointed means of grace. And to have the corroborative testimony declared, the conscience must be kept undefiled. There must be marked separation from the world. You must keep yourself from idols. And thus honouring the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in you, and obeying Christ your Saviour in all things, you shall walk in the light, and have, day by day, joyful assurance of your Heavenly Father's love. "God, the Lord, will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly."

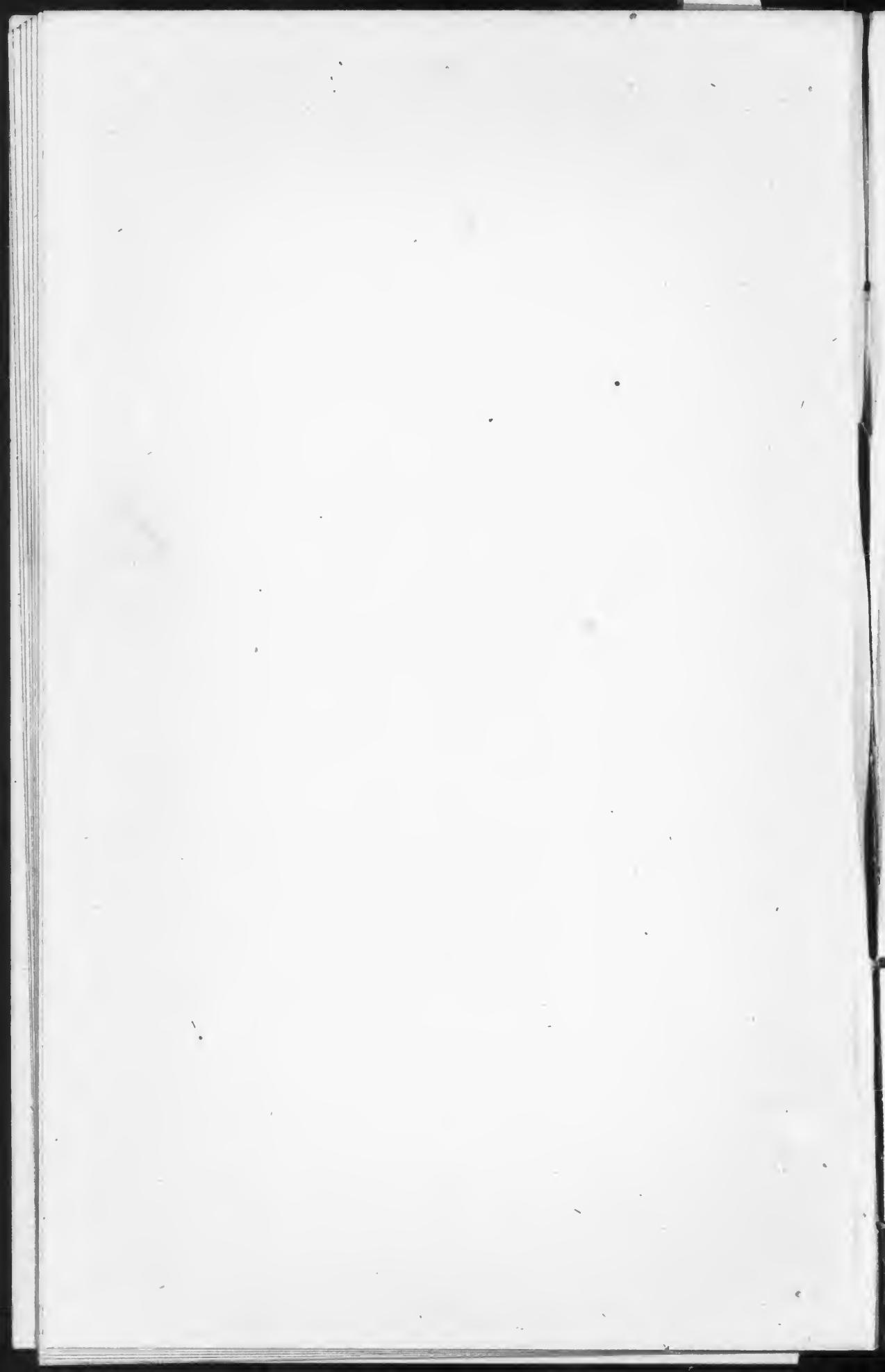


IV.

## VISIBLE UNION

WITH THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST.



## Union with the Church.

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Reader,

You are an attendant at the house of God, and desire, above all things, to secure the salvation of your soul; but, hitherto, you have not joined the Church of Christ, not being fully convinced that you ought to do so. You are free to confess that your present position, as belonging only to the congregation of outward worshippers, is not satisfactory to yourself, and that sometimes you are led to ask, if you are not called to a more formal and more intimate association with the professed followers of the Saviour. In such circumstances, it is plainly your duty to search diligently for positive knowledge of the Divine will on this question, with the firm and resolute purpose to act obediently. Consider, then, how certainly it appears to be the will of God that His people should be separate from the world, and be visibly associated together in His service.

## *Union with the Church.*

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And observe, at the beginning, that if Jehovah is to have a Church at all upon earth, it must necessarily be by the separation of its members from the ungodly, and by their visible union in His name. What is the Church? In the largest sense, the term CHURCH denotes all the redeemed and saved of the Lord, of every age and of every nation. This is the "Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood;" and which includes the saved in heaven as well as the saved on earth. This is the one *Catholic* and *Apostolic* Church, to which all real believers in Jesus belong, whatever may be the circumstantial differences among them. But in the more limited and common use of the term CHURCH, it signifies a community or society of Christians, associated visibly together for religious purposes. Or, as the Nineteenth Article of the Church of England more fully expresses it,— "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." But how could there be, in this sense, a Church of God on earth at all, unless they who compose it are separated from the world, and united together in the name of

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Jesus Christ? The very nature and constitution of the Church supposes this. Hence the Scripture representations of that Church are not of sheep, scattered and separate, but of a collected flock, folded and fed, by the good Shepherd; not of stones strewn in disorder over the ground, but as built up together into a spiritual house; not as plants, rising up here and there, solitarily and isolated, but as trees growing together in a vineyard, or in a garden; not as dismembered limbs, without mutual sympathy and help, but as a “whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” To belong to the Church at all, then, a man must be separate from the world, and be formally and visibly associated with the professed followers of the Saviour.

In accordance with this self-evident truth, the Holy Scriptures enjoin marked and distinct separation from the world, and union with the Church, upon all who would be approved and accepted of God. Of old it was commanded that Israel should stand separate and alone from the nations and families around; and it was on this expressed condition that Jehovah was declared to be their God. Our Lord re-

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quired confession of His name, at the risk of property, friends, and even life itself, as the imperative condition of discipleship on earth, and of acknowledgment before His Father in heaven. He expressly affirmed to His disciples that He had chosen them out of the world ; that they were not of the world ; and He solemnly prayed that they might be kept from the evil that is in the world. The Apostles enjoined upon their converts separation from the world, as an indispensable requirement for admission into the family of God ; saying, “ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Obedient to these Divine requirements, the Lord’s faithful and accepted servants have, in all ages, been separate from the ungodly, and have been openly associated together, both in profession and conduct. In the age before the Flood, the righteous were distinguished from the wicked ; and it was the disobedient inter-marriages of “the sons of God” with “the daughters of men” which became the prolific source of the corrupt and violent abominations that followed. To preserve the Truth from

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extinction, and to have for Himself a people, Jehovah separated Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, and led him forth to the land of Canaan. In that land, the Patriarchs sojourned as in a strange country, not settling in fixed abodes among idolatrous inhabitants, but dwelling in moveable tabernacles. When in possession of the land of promise, Israel, by Divine command, drove out the Canaanite from among them, and were known and reviled by surrounding nations for their faith in the living God, and for their obedience to Him. And when Israel had become abominably corrupt, and ripe by profligate wickedness for judgment, "*then* they that feared the Lord spake often one to another ; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name."

Christians have been joined together in profession and conduct, from Christ downwards to the present time. The disciples companioned with the Saviour in the days of His flesh. After His departure, they came together in a large upper room in Jerusalem ; they were together, in the breaking of bread and in prayers ; and when scattered abroad by persecution through various regions, they formed themselves into Churches, and were known and

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reported of by pagan writers, as assembling together before daylight, to sing hymns of praise to Christ. And so in all succeeding generations, faithful Christians have been separate from idolaters, and from the ungodly,— professing openly before the world faith in Jesus Christ.

Nor was this open profession of Christ deemed unimportant by the followers of the Saviour; for many of them suffered the loss of all things, and sacrificed their lives, rather than renounce it. The Apostles of our Lord, with a solitary exception, endured martyrdom for the name of Jesus. Ignatius, for openly declaring before the emperor Trajan that he had Christ, who was crucified, within him, was condemned to be taken from Antioch to Rome, and publicly thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheatre, for the entertainment of the people; and when feeling his bones cranch within the lion's mouth, he exclaimed, "Now I begin to be a Christian." The aged Polycarp, when entreated by his judges to have pity upon his own great age, and to save his life, by denying Christ, and swearing by Cæsar, said, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath never wronged me, and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me!" The youthful Sanctus, of Vienne, was con-

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demned to death for his confession that he was a Christian ; and knowing that confession of Christ would bring upon him the doom of death, by law, replied to every question publicly proposed to him, whether of name, condition, or country, "I am a Christian," and died steadfast in the confession of Christ, after enduring the most horrible tortures. Blandina, suspended on a stake, to be snatched at by wild beasts, when unable, through exhaustion, longer to confess otherwise her faith in a crucified Saviour, spread forth her mutilated arms in the form of a cross, and after suffering indignities and tortures "as no woman had suffered," died, testifying for Him. And others, for confession of Christ, had "trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Thus, so absolutely essential to salvation was open confession of Christ deemed by early Christians, that to make it, they sacrificed all things.

And in later times, when in professedly

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Christian countries the faith has been corrupted, and vital godliness has declined, the same spirit of sacrifice, and of resolute profession, has been shown. Martin Luther might have dreamed away his life lazily in cloistered seclusion, as did other monks of his day ; but faithfulness in confessing Christ would not allow him to do so ; and when summoned to public trial before men, armed with the power of death over him, and who thirsted for his blood, he declared to those who sought to dissuade him from exposing himself to such imminent danger, “If there were as many devils in the city of Worms as there are tiles on the houses, yet would I go thither ;” and his lion-like spirit openly braved for the truth the rage and fury of Papal Rome. The

. . . “Slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,”—

sacrificed homes, families, and life, for the faith of the Son of God. In our own country, Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, praying Bradford, holy Rowland Taylor, valiant old Latimer, and a host besides, died at the stake, confessing amidst the flames, the truth as it is in Jesus. Wesley and Whitfield could not satisfy themselves with “learned leisure” in colleges ; but amidst contempt and violence, professed the

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saving truths of the Gospel. And so with their descendants. Under names of obloquy, and acts of persecution, they have proclaimed themselves followers of Jesus Christ. And can it be supposed that confession of the Saviour is less obligatory upon His followers now, than it was in years and centuries past away ?

It is evident, both from precept and example, that the Lord's people are, at any cost or sacrifice, to make open profession of their devotedness to Him, and that they are to be known as such by visible association together in His service.

But in our country, and in our day, it is not mere nominal Christianity that will serve. With us, nearly all are professedly Christian. It is not now, as in the days of the Apostles, when if a man professed himself a believer in Jesus as the Son of God, he literally lost house and land, father and mother, wife and children, and even his own life also, for Christ's sake. Then, there was not much danger of hypocrisy in Christian profession ; so that St. John could confidently affirm, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." But in our time, when a man loses nothing in reputation, nor in property, by the confession of Christ, something more must be understood as constituting the test of vital

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Christianity, than a mere name, or than visible association with Christian worshippers in the sanctuary. There is an inner circle of spiritual and devoted followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, who are separate from the world, as oil is from water, or light from darkness ; and who, for their spiritual and circumspect life, are beheld by the ungodly with unrelenting hostility and disdain. These are “the salt of the earth,” and “the light of the world;” and, obedient to the Saviour’s commands, they love one another, have fellowship together, and show forth His death until His coming again. This is the true Church, to which all wise virgins, who carry oil in their vessels with their lamps, belong. And to this Church of professing spiritual Christians, all are called to unite themselves, who would be ready for the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom.

Love to Christ, as God our Saviour, and zeal for His glory, claim this, as the imperative duty of all who would be acknowledged as His disciples. “No man liveth to himself.” “Ye are not your own ; for ye are bought with a price : therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

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But there are benefits and considerations relating to ourselves, as well as to His name and cause, which, if duly weighed, cannot but influence a sincere inquirer for the will of God in Christian profession. There is, for instance, the believer's own *personal safety*. In man's constitution and circumstances, he needs all the guards and aids to godliness that he can possibly obtain. He cannot afford to forego anything that will serve him in circumspection and constancy. In this view, public profession of Christian discipleship, by visible union with the Church, is important. It is the distinct avowal made before men of a character that must be scrupulously maintained. There is, then, no longer the loose, licentious defence of inconsistent conduct, "I make no profession of religion;" but there is the challenge openly given to all around to observe the life as in agreement with the precepts and example of Christ. And the remembrance by the Christian professor that he is under human *surveillance* is no light motive to cautious obedience.

Decision, too, strengthens and fortifies the soul itself. It cuts off, in many instances, the occasion for temptation. While undecided, there is repeated vacillation between duty and pleasure; and then both Satan and man will tempt powerfully. But when the public avowal

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is made, "I am the Lord's, and no longer belong to an evil world," then the devil is resisted, and he flees from further solicitations to worldly pleasures and practices, as safely allowable; and the sinful around cease from all hope of retaining the avowed and decided Christian as their friend.

There is, also, increased safety in companionship with the righteous. It strengthens a man's confidence to know that he is not alone. Singularity is no small trial to human nature, which needs countenance and encouragement in the presence of others. The soldier marches boldly to the field, and waxes valiant in the fight, attended by his comrades; while, if left to himself, he falters and falls before the enemy. Then, there is mutual watchfulness, and mutual help, afforded by association in the Church of Christ. It is a Christian duty "to warn them that are unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak." It is expressly required of believers that they "confess their faults one to another, and pray one for another, that they may be healed." They are to "exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And the superior safety of association is positively declared, where it is stated, "Two are better than one; because they have a good

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reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

The believer's growth in grace, and religious edification, is another consideration calling for union with the Church of Christ. As it has been remarked, "Trees grow best in plantations and forests; so do Christians in Church-fellowship." They strengthen, and train one another up in the ways of God. They edify one another in love. This is evident, from the very nature of things; for in the Church, each member has the experience of all to profit by. There are mutual counsels, prayers, and encouragements. The fellowship of saints is not a mere name. It is a reality. When a man is converted, he is to strengthen his brethren.

Then, there are special blessings bestowed upon the Church which they only who belong to it partake of. There are answers given to agreed prayer, which cannot be claimed by such as live in separation. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask," said the Saviour, "it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in

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My name, there am I in the midst of them." Who can say, how many benefits are received by members of the Church of Christ in answer to prayers daily and hourly offered on their behalf by their fellow Christians? Are the innumerable petitions thus offered of no account before God? May not seasonable protection, strength, and comfort, be derived in answer to the prayers of God's elect, who cry unto Him day and night? Our Lord has especially prayed for His Church. He does so still. And He has made specific promises of good to be bestowed upon it. There are times of refreshing, and visitations of abundant grace, to be vouchsafed to it. Yea, the Holy Ghost is sent to abide in the Church, to teach, comfort, sanctify, and preserve it. Then, unquestionably, to be of the Church, and to be a partaker of all spiritual blessings given to it, is both man's duty and privilege.

*Usefulness in the cause of God*, is another consideration. There are services to be performed for others, as well as for ourselves. If our association with professing Christians will be profitable to ourselves, as we have seen, then such association will be profitable to others. If the experience, counsel, sympathy, and help, of Christian fellowship be what has been set forth, then we ought to yield our part

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in the supply of mutual benefits. We are to give as well as to receive. And there are requirements of service for Christ—in bearing each other's burdens—in rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and weeping with them that weep—and in doing good and communicating—that cannot be fulfilled, without close and intimate fellowship with the followers of the Saviour.

There are, also, services for Christ's kingdom to be performed requiring association and united effort, such as spreading the knowledge of His truth in our own country, and sending forth messengers of the Churches into regions beyond. The Christian ministry has to be supported: the sick and the poor have to be visited and relieved. Sacraments have to be partaken of; ordinances have to be maintained; and means for the conversion of sinners, for the edification of saints, and for the furtherance of the Gospel, have to be provided; so that as one generation passeth away and another cometh, the cause of God may be perpetuated on the earth.

There is, further, *the professing Christian's personal comfort and enjoyment* to be considered. Man is a social being, craving friendly sympathy and companionship. He is not made for solitude, but for fellowship with others. And in the Church of Christ is provided what he

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requires in this respect. It is the *household* of faith : the *family* of God. The communion of saints, where holy souls love one another with a pure heart, fervently, is an unspeakable privilege. "I am a companion of them that fear thee," said David. "Come, all ye that fear God," exclaimed he, "and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." Next to fellowship with the Lord, the fellowship of saints yields the sweetest solace and the richest enjoyment to be found on earth. How soothing in trouble to converse with one who, from his own experience, can fully sympathise with us ! And how it increases our pleasures, when one having kindred tastes and pursuits enters with us into them ! It is so in Christian fellowship, where, knit together in love, followers of the Saviour speak to each other of their trials and sorrows, deliverances and enjoyments ; pray with and for one another ; and as fellow-travellers, express together their bright anticipations of the glory hereafter to be revealed ! How often does the Saviour join Himself to them, and make their hearts burn within them, as He talks with them by the way ; so that they joyfully sing,—

" And if our fellowship below  
In Jesus be so sweet,  
What heights of rapture shall we know,  
When round His throne we meet ! "

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The Church on earth is the pattern and outline of the Church in heaven. It is the figure of the true Jerusalem above; and it is in the exercises and pleasures of the one, that the saints are prepared for the employments and happiness of the other. Christian fellowship here is the *earnest*, as well as the emblem, of fellowship hereafter. It yields *foretastes* of celestial bliss, in "joy that is unspeakable and full of glory."

READER, with all these considerations of Divine requirements, godly examples, service to Christ and His followers, and of advantage to yourself, it can no longer be doubtful that it is the will of God that you should separate yourself from the world, and unite yourself with His visible Church. It may be, however, that you still hesitate to do so, on grounds of objection that present themselves inwardly to your mind.

It is suggested, for instance, that you are *not good enough* for professed membership in the Church of Christ. If you intend to live in sin, and to disobey God, then let the suggestion be hearkened to, and ponder on the consequences which must inevitably follow. But if you are determined to flee from the wrath to come, and to follow Christ in His precepts and example, then you may safely,

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and acceptably, profess Him to be your Saviour, and openly ally yourself with His servants. What is the Church of Christ? It is an hospital for the sick and diseased, who seek a cure for their souls. It is a school for the ignorant and unlearned who would be wise unto salvation. It is the Saviour's house, into which the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind are brought in from the streets and lanes of the city, and from the highways and hedges; and where by free, unmerited grace, they are prepared for everlasting companionship with the saints in heaven. Then, if you are "sick of sin, and implore a cure," enter the Church of Christ. If you want instruction—if you want spiritual food, and the wedding garment for the marriage supper of the Lamb—obey the call made upon you, and "come in," believing that "all things are now ready." "Come in thou blessed of the Lord; why tarriest thou without?" You purpose coming into the Church some time. When? When you are less sinful, and more worthy? When will that be? If ever you come acceptably, it must be, not in the spirit of the self-lauding Pharisee, but with the plea of the downcast Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Let not your unworthiness keep you from Christ, or from His Church.

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But you are *afraid of going back from following Christ, and of thus dishonouring His name.* Fear of sin is salutary; and in this view, we would say to all Christian professors, "Be in the fear of the Lord all the day long;" for, "blessed is the man that feareth always." But if fear keep you from the performance of duty, you may be sure that it is not godly fear. Where are you most likely to be kept from evil? in the Church, or out of it? If you really are afraid of sin, where will you find the strongest protection, and the most ready and efficient help? Try yourself by these questions, and see if there is not in the secret place of your heart a thought that you will have outside the Church a wider domain for selfish pleasures and pursuits: that you will not have to be so strict and circumspect in your conduct. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." It may be hiding its evil purposes under the specious plea of conscious weakness.

You reply, but *the Church is not pure and good as it ought to be.* This is true. And it is sorrowfully known that too many who bear the name of Christ dishonour it. We excuse not sin; nor would we palliate it in any of its forms. Christ is grievously wounded in the house of His friends. But where is it taught

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that all the professed members of the visible Church of Christ are to prove true and faithful? Did the presence of Judas in the apostleship suggest that it would be so? Does the teaching of Christ, in His parables of the tares and the wheat, the wise and foolish virgins, and of the faithful and unfaithful stewards, suppose this? Were the Churches governed by inspired men all pure? Do the records and admonitions in apostolic writings show this? Do Christ's own Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia, prove it. Has there ever been a Church of Christian professors, pure and unblameable in all things? Then, why keep outside the Church because it is not pure? We would have the Church as free from evil as may be; and if men wilfully commit sin they ought not, after due warning and remonstrance, to be allowed to remain in it. But persons officially charged with the discipline of the Church, must not be too hasty in removing what is unpromising, lest by rooting up the tares they root up the wheat also. In your case, however, if you remain out of the Church until it shall be pure and spotless, you will remain out of it for ever. You will live and die out of it. Again, look within, and see if there is not pride masking itself under this plea of an impure Church? Why do you require that

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which the holiest and best of men have not required? Are you so much more pure and excellent than they, that you must have nothing but purity and perfection to associate with? This objection, if tested, may, like others, be a mere specious excuse, rather than a reason.

It may be, however, that you secretly think that *you may get to heaven without a public profession of religion*. It is hard to conceive that you can do so. "But," you ask, "have none been saved, but such as have made public profession of their love to Christ? Have there been no 'hidden ones,' unknown by men, but approved and accepted by God?" No doubt there have been such. With the remembrance of the seven thousand unknown by Elijah, whom the Almighty had reserved to Himself, and who had not bowed the knee to Baal, it would be rash, and uncharitable, to conclude that the servants of the Lord are always known. But such cases do not justify you in the neglect of a positive duty. In a Christian country, where the Scriptures are in free circulation, and where there is liberty of conscience, there can be no plea admitted for disobedience to the Divine will. Who shall say that a man is safe in disobedience to Him, who has commanded His servants to commemorate, His death together, and that frequently, saying "This do in remembrance of

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Me; drink ye all of this; and as oft as ye do this, do it in remembrance of Me?" And who shall say that a man without public profession of Christ may be saved, when it is authoritatively declared that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation?"

Do you ask, *What Church am I to join?* Seek that Church where the saving and experimental truths of the Gospel are faithfully preached, and where, under godly discipline, and with Christian fellowship, you can secure the safest protection, and the best help in the way to heaven, and associate yourself with it. Of course, Church-membership, in itself, will not save you. And it is only on the supposition that you give yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, to be His for ever, that Christian profession is urged upon you. First, become a disciple of the Saviour, and then declare that you are such; and having received Christ, and confessed Him before men, you shall be a partaker of all the blessings which He has provided for His followers.

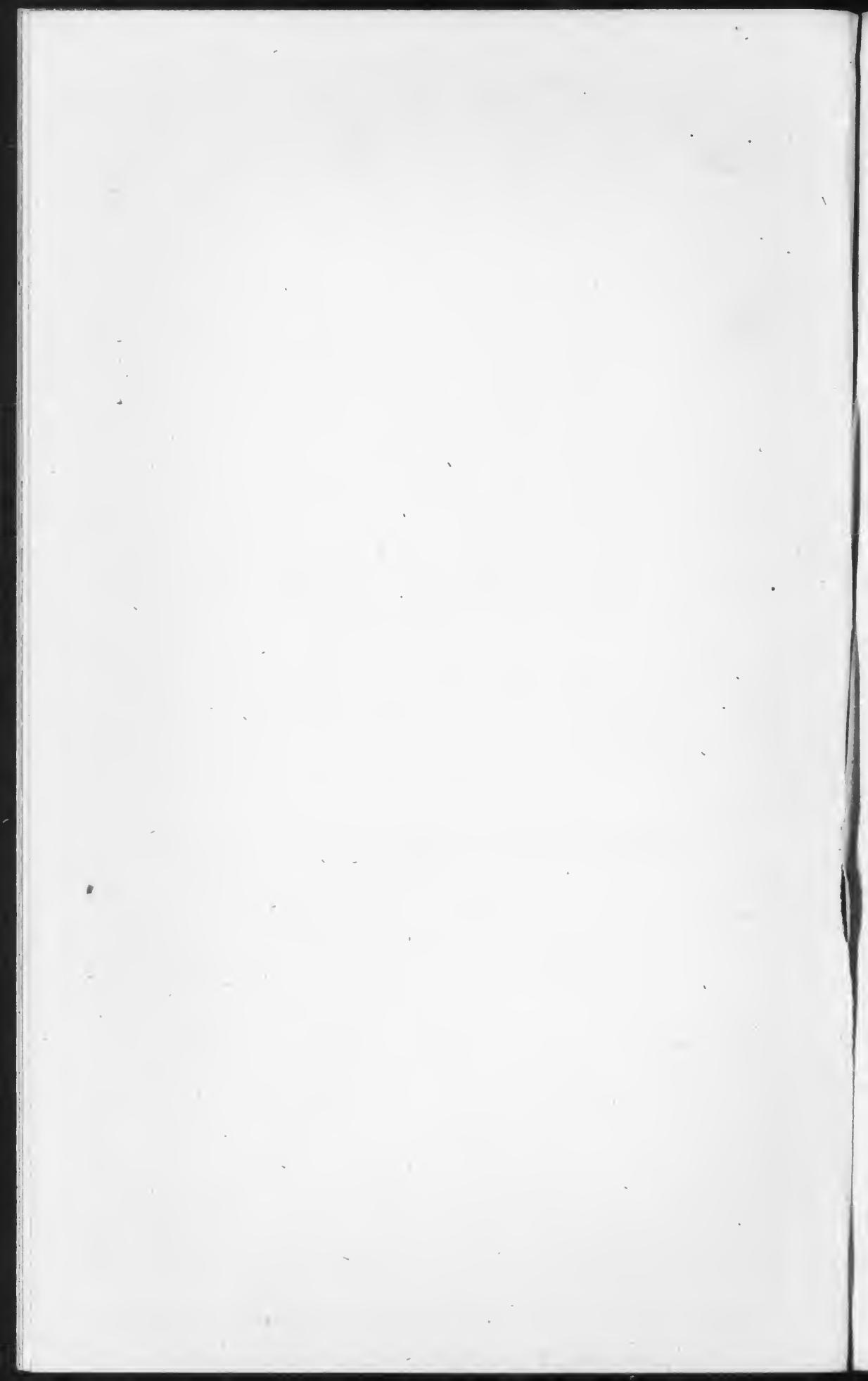


V.

# PERFECT LOVE

FOR

CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS.



## PERFECT LOVE.

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Reader,

Start not at the term "Perfect" in the above title, as presumptuous in relation to weak and sinful man, but consider in what sense it is employed, and under what limitations. It is not employed in an absolute sense, as it would be in relation to God who in His infinite nature is Love, and that without any limitation whatever. It is not used in a sense that would have been applicable to our first parents in Paradise, where, free from all mental and physical infirmities, they loved God in the full perfection of their nature. Neither is it to be understood in a sense that would belong to the heavenly state, where with expanded and glorified powers which cannot degenerate, the spirits of just men are made perfect for ever. But the phrase "Perfect Love," as applied to the state of religious attainment by saints upon earth, is employed *relatively*, and as expressive of *high degree*. It signifies that full

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maturity of love to God and man which the Christian believer can by Divine grace attain in this world, where he is compassed with infirmity, and surrounded by temptation. Whatever may be the utmost fulness of love possessed by him on earth is the meaning to be attached to the phrase here employed.

Not that love thus made perfect is to be viewed as incapable of growth and increase. A thing may be perfect in its nature, and yet be capable of enlargement. A tree, or a flower, may be in all parts complete, and yet advance daily in strength and beauty. Fruit may be perfect in its kind, and yet both grow and ripen. The human frame is perfect in nature in childhood, and in all its parts, and yet it advances to manhood. The soul of man has at the beginning all its faculties, so that nothing new is added afterwards, and yet its powers expand, and its capacity enlarges. And so with perfect love in the Christian believer. It may increase with his increase of knowledge and power of loving, and yet, in each succeeding stage of its progress, fill all the mind and all the heart. Herein will be man's growth in eternity. As the saints in heaven shall advance in the knowledge of God they will advance in love to Him; and yet, being finite in nature, they never can fully know the infinite; so that, while perfect in

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their love at all periods, there will ever be room for further growth and advancement.

In this limited and restricted sense, the term "Perfect Love" is here employed; and with this relative meaning no reasonable objection can be urged against it. No person objects to the use of such a term as expressive of full and entire devotion to a noble purpose or object. If it were said that Sir Isaac Newton had perfect love for science, that Raphael had perfect love for painting, Milton for poetry, and Handel for sacred music, no misconception of meaning, or exaggeration of words, would be complained of. And no valid objection can be made to the term here employed for expressing full devotion to God by the Christian believer.

The Holy Spirit does not scruple to employ such terms in the Scriptures when setting forth a state of entire devotedness to God ; and it will be admitted that, where practicable, it is best to employ Scripture phraseology in expressing Scripture doctrine. "Walk before Me, and be thou *perfect*," said Jehovah to Abraham. "Be ye *perfect*, even as your Father in heaven is *perfect*," said Christ to His disciples. The Apostles exhorted their converts to "leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and to go on to *perfection*." "This, also, we wish," said they, even your *perfection*." And they enjoined upon

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them, on the ground of Divine promises, this state of salvation,—that believers in Christ should “cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and *perfect* holiness in the fear of God.” They spake of Christians being made *perfect* in every good work: of being *perfect* and *entire*, lacking nothing: of love being *made perfect*; and again, and again, they employ the very phrase here used to represent maturity in grace; so that the phrase “Perfect Love” is not of human invention, but of Divine authority.

“The Bible,” says Chillingworth, in his golden sentence, which cannot be too often quoted, “is the Religion of Protestants.” We must bring all our opinions to this standard, and tried by it, they must stand or fall. “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” And the Bible not only freely employs the terms we have quoted, but, also, plainly teaches that perfection in Love is attainable in this life. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thine heart, with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy might,” was the commandment given by God to His people of old, which they were ever to bear in remembrance, to teach diligently to their children, and to talk daily of, in sitting down, walking by the way, lying down, and rising up. And this Divine command, so posi-

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tively enjoined, and made so familiar by frequent repetition under the Law, was quoted by Christ, and sealed with His authority under the Gospel. He declared it to be the first and great commandment; and affirmed that, together with the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," it comprised, in meaning, all religion, as taught by the law and the prophets. (Deut. vi. 5. Matt. xxii, 37.) It cannot be supposed that a commandment would be thus peremptorily given by the Divine Being where there was not power to obey it. Such a supposition would reflect dishonour on the Divine character. And let love to God be thus supreme, and employ all the strength of the intellect, all the strength of the affections, and all the passions of the soul, and it must be admitted that love is perfect. The whole intellectual and spiritual man is under the dominion of love to God; and loving with all the power of his nature, his love, relatively, is equal to the love of an angel, or of a glorified saint in heaven. It is perfect in its degree, and with the fulness of its power.

It may, in this preparatory state, be associated with infirmity. It may be defective in perception, err in judgment; and erring in judgment, it may err correspondingly in practice; but loving perfectly, and doing what it

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believes to be the will of God, love is accepted in the place of perfect obedience, as the Apostle declares, when he says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Who would judge rigorously, and with condemnation, erroneous judgment or erroneous action, where the full intent was to serve one ardently loved? Regret might be felt for infirmity, but love in such a case would be taken in the place of perfect judgment and conduct. And what father would reject or despise the service of a child, who, to the extent of its capacity, sought in love to do its parent's will? Its service would be small, comparatively. It could not love as strongly as the up-grown son; and, with its feeble powers, it could not do much, mentally or physically. But doing what it could, its service of love would be accepted as fully as the larger service of the elder brother. God accepts the service of man according to what he has, and not according to what he has not. The Divine Being is not a hard Master, reaping where He has not sown, and gathering where He has not strawed. He knows the extent of man's capacities in this world; and He does not in this probationary state of weakness and temptation require the love of an angel, or the love of a glorified saint. Perfect Love, with the limited capacity, and with the mental and physical in-

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firmities of this mortal life, is what God requires from man ; and this, through the infinite merit of the Saviour's sacrifice, and the continuous prevalency of His intercession, is as acceptable as perfect obedience.

This perfection of love required so positively under the Law, and enjoined so authoritatively by Christ under the Gospel, is, as might be expected, prominently set forth, and variously inculcated by the inspired Apostles. They had received our Lord's teaching on this subject, and that under the most solemn circumstances. They had gathered around Him at the Last Supper, when in the tenderness of Divine affection He had poured forth all His heart for them in instruction and prayer. According to promise, they had received the Spirit of Truth to lead them into all truth ; and He had revealed to them what, in extent of meaning, they could not bear to receive in the days of the Saviour's presence among them. And with this fulness of Divine Revelation, they set forth Perfect Love as the duty and privilege of Christian believers in this life ; and they urged and enjoined it upon them by every variety of powerful motive and consideration.

St. Paul was not called to be an Apostle until after Christ's resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven. He was, as expressed

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by himself, "one born out of due time," yet he was truly an Apostle, and was guided by the same Spirit of Truth; and he, in the thirteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, shows not only that love is essential to religion, but exalts it above all gifts and graces, whether of men or angels, both among what are temporary in this life and what shall abide in the life to come; and in his own practical manner, elaborately sets forth what it does in the maturity of its strength, and what it suffers. St. John, "that disciple whom Jesus loved, who also leaned on his breast at supper," in the ripeness of old age and of spiritual wisdom, wrote Epistles, which in their paternal simplicity of style express the loftiest truths; and in them he dwells upon the purity and perfection of love in his sweetest manner; showing to Christians of various ages and attainments—to "little children," to "young men," and to "fathers"—when love is perfect; how in its perfection it acts and feels; and after declaring that "God is love," and that "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," adds, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world."

The Scripture teaching on this subject is

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clear and certain. It appears from the beginning to the end of the Bible. Perfect Love attainable in this life, is not a truth incidentally taught therein, but is set forth distinctly and prominently for all to see, and so that he who runs may read. Consequently, it is a truth which has been held by the faithful in the Church from the beginning. The "Early Fathers," as they are called, held it, as we may learn from the writings of such venerated men as Clemens Alexandrinus. Devout and holy men in the Church of Rome, like De Renty, and Thomas à Kempis—who were saints in spite of a corrupt system, and not by it—taught it. The Church of England distinctly teaches it, and leads its members to pray that God would "cleanse the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that they may *perfectly love* Him and worthily magnify His Holy Name." Archbishop Leighton makes it prominent in his writings. Jeremy Taylor, Bishop Hall, and other pious Churchmen, have given specific rules and directions for holy living and dying. Devout Nonconformists, such as Dr. Doddridge, have done the same. Wesley, and his followers, have professed it through a century past. And recently, both in England and America, there have been deep stirrings of mind and heart in relation to it;

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so that books on the “Interior Life,” and the “Higher Life,” have been multiplied and circulated among all sections of the Church. Thus it is plain, that the doctrine of Perfect Love attainable in this life is no modern discovery, but has been the doctrine of the Scriptures and of the Church from the beginning.

It may, however, be asked, “Where has it been possessed and exemplified in actual life? It may be taught in Scripture, and by the Church, as a state desirable,—and the children of God may be urged to press forward to the attainment of it,—but who are they that have really been made perfect in love?” “Enoch walked with God;” and in his intimate communing with the Most High, came so near to the confines of the spiritual world that he was drawn into it—“he was not, for God took him.” “Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations.” “Job was a perfect man: one that feared God and eschewed evil.” David, the man after God’s own heart, and who “did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite,” exclaimed, in the ardour of his love, “As the hart panteth”—literally, “brayeth,” “crieth aloud”—“after the water brooks, so panteth my

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soul after Thee, O God." Asaph, in the entirety of his love, asked, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee." Daniel's love was so strong that threats of violent death could not induce him to omit, in a single instance, retirement to his chamber for communion with God. Stephen was "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Paul said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The world had no more power over him than a dead malefactor would have, and he was as insensible to its allurements as if he were dead; for by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, he was crucified to the world, and the world unto him. And so strong was his assurance of faith that he confidently asked, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" . . . . "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

St. John embodied in his character and life his own teaching on Perfect Love. He declared, as a matter of personal experience, "Herein is

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*our love made perfect."* Love was his characteristic,—and that to the end of life; for Jerome relates of him, that when he was too old to walk to the church, as he had been wont, they who loved him bore him in their arms into the midst of the congregation, when, as a father in Christ, he stretched out his trembling hands, and said, "Little children, love one another," and then they bore him away again.

And Perfect Love has been possessed and exemplified in life and conduct by many devoted Christians since the days of the Apostles. Martyrs and Confessors loved God supremely, and sacrificed life and all things for Him. Martin Luther declared that such was his love to Christ, that if a drawn sword were between him and the object of his affection, he would disregard life, and rush into the Saviour's arms. Fenelon, the gifted Archbishop of Cambray, exhibited in his daily spirit and conduct perfect love to God and man. Madam Guyon, his persecuted friend and disciple, lost so completely her will in the will of God, that she could hardly speak of her own dispositions and desires; but felt, as she declared, "herself lost in the Divine immensity as a drop of water in the sea." George Fox, and the early Quakers, also professed to have attained this state of salvation, and

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njoined the attainment of it upon others. What maturity in love was exemplified in Rutherford, who suffered imprisonment for Christ in Scotland; and in Joseph Alleine, who wrote such sweet letters from his prison in the West of England to his sorrowing friends and shepherdless people! Fletcher, of Madeley, flamed with seraphic love to God, not only in the pulpit and among students, but in daily intercourse with mankind; so that after having been acquainted with him for thirty years, and having conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, and during a journey of many hundred miles, Mr. Wesley declared that he had not, in all that time, heard him speak an improper word, or seen him do an improper action. Similar testimony is borne of the Rev. John Smith, in his Memoir by the Rev. Richard Treffry, junior. It is recorded of him, from the lips of a friend who had lived with him two years, that during that time he was never seen to perform an action, or heard to speak a word, inconsistent with Perfect Love, which he believed himself to have attained. The same might be affirmed of the writer's mother, who, through successive years before her death was never known, in all her active duties and public engagements, to utter a word, or to perform an act, contrary to the require-

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ments of Perfect Love. There are many others that might be named, who gave undoubted evidence that they loved the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; such as Lady Maxwell; Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe; Mrs. Rogers; the Rev. John Hunt, Missionary to Fiji; Mrs. Mary Pickford, of Salisbury; Mrs. Mary Cryer, wife of Thomas Cryer, Missionary to India; and her sister, Margaret Burton. And there are not a few alive at the present time, who experience and possess this state of entire devotedness to God. A great cloud of witnesses, both of the dead and the living, attest the reality of Perfect Love, as the possession of Christian believers in this world.

There is, however, one Example which is pre-eminent, and which must never be lost sight of amidst inferior examples which may be named—that is, the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. In some things, as God incarnate, He was alone, and is inimitable; but as the *Son of Man*, He is our pattern and model, after which we are to be formed. His mind is to be in us,—we are to be conformed to His image,—He has left us an example that we may tread in His steps. Perfect Love was fully exemplified in Him; and He has said, “Every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.”

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READER, this blessed state of Christian experience may be yours. God is no respecter of persons; and He is as ready to perfect you in love as He was to perfect Job, Daniel, St. John, Archbishop Leighton, Fletcher, or any other saint who could be named. What valid reason is there against your being as holy, and as ardently devoted to the Lord, as any of them? They were men of like passions with ourselves. They were conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity. They were saved wholly by Divine grace; and they were exposed to temptations and sufferings, surpassing, in some instances, those which beset us. Our motives to gratitude and devotedness to God are more powerful than theirs. Why, then, should we not equal them in perfection of love?

How blessed would be such a state! To have the heart, the mind, and soul, with all their strength, devoted in love to God. To love Him supremely, and to feel that our will is wholly sunk and swallowed up in His. To say with holy Fenelon, when kneeling before Him, "O Lord, give to me, thy child, what is proper, whatsoever it may be. I dare not ask either crosses or comforts. I only present myself before Thee . . . Smite, or heal! Depress me, or raise me up! I adore all thy purposes, without knowing them. I am silent. I offer

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myself in sacrifice." To feel no resentment under insult and injury,—no envy when another is preferred before us,—no fear amidst losses and dangers ; and to lie becalmed, like Luther, in the bosom of the Almighty. To be free from self-love, and to have all " love of the creature" subordinate to the love of God. To have self, in its ten thousand forms and ramifications, annihilated. To seek God's glory in all things ; and to go forth, everywhere, breathing love and goodwill to mankind. How blessed such a state ! What a heaven upon earth would be found in it ! How serenely joyous ! How sabbatic and holy this rest of Perfect Love !

And how serviceable to the cause of God in the world would such a state be ! How pure the motive in all that was undertaken ; how fervent the spirit impelling to action ; and how cheerful and persevering the conduct pursued. Loving all mankind in God, and for Christ's sake, no labour would be accounted too great, so long as the Divine glory might be promoted in the welfare and salvation of our fellow beings. Love would make every service easy, and every burden light.

Do you now enquire how this blessed state is to be attained ? The answer is :—

1. *Sit down and deliberately ponder the truths*

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*relating to it.* Religion, in all its parts, calls for thought and study; and in this, its matured form, it requires serious thought and earnest study.

Be fully satisfied that Perfect Love is attainable in this life. It is a law in our nature not to hold ourselves responsible for what is not enjoined upon us by competent authority, and not to put forth effort for attaining what is believed to be unattainable. Therefore, search the Scriptures on this subject until you are fully satisfied on their meaning relating to it, and until the obligation is not left to rest vaguely upon the mind, but to press with weight and power upon the conscience. And in satisfying yourself on this important question, do not confine your inquiries to single texts, with their supposed interpretations, but ascertain what is the general scope and bearing of Scripture respecting it. Know for yourself if anything less than supreme love to God can meet the Divine requirements.—If the object of Christ in giving Himself for us that He might redeem us from *all* iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, did not contemplate this.—And if the commands, the precepts, the promises, and the exhortations of the Bible, are not intended to lead to the possession and enjoyment of it. Reflect upon the reasonableness and necessity of such

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a state of matured Christian affection, both in relation to God and man. Can anything less than the whole heart satisfy a Divine Father—a God of love? Would it be likely to meet His requirements to love Him supremely only in death? Shall meekness and patience be perfect only when there is no more insult to endure, and no more affliction to suffer? Shall love to our neighbour only be perfected when we are departing from him? And what is there in the “article of death” of a purifying nature or tendency? Disease and corruption are physical, and cannot produce moral results. Weigh these questions deliberately in the mind, and before the teaching of the inspired word. And consider, also, if such a doctrine, which gives all in man to God, can exalt pride, and if it does not bring honour to Christ, by ascribing to Him a full and complete salvation. And then, having satisfied yourself by Scripture and reason on this matter,

2. *Count the cost* of being wholly devoted to the service of the Lord in love. The love of the world must be renounced; for “if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The glitter and glare of a vain world must be rejected; the pride of life; the thought of respectability and position; the applause of men; the love of self, in all its multiplied forms

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of self-preferment and self-admiration. All doubtful pursuits and practices must be abandoned; for "he that doubteth is damned;" and all adventurous familiarities with earthly pleasures and pastimes. All love of the creature must be subordinate to the love of God. All bodily appetites and passions must be brought into subjection to it; and all you have and are must be unreservedly consecrated to the service and glory of the Lord. This does not signify that a man is literally to separate himself from the world, and retire into seclusion, as mistaken men did in early times. That would be shunning the world, rather than overcoming it. That would be putting the light under a bushel, instead of setting it upon a candlestick. The Saviour's direction is, "Let your light so shine before men;" and His prayer for His disciples is, not that they may be taken out of the world, but be kept from the evil that is in it. A Christian with love made perfect will be diligent in business, while fervent in spirit. He will not undervalue wealth and position, if given to him by Divine providence, for they may be made subservient to the glory of God. He may be a man of intellectual and æsthetical taste and refinement, and feed his devotion daily amidst the wonders of creation, and the works of art. He may love his friends,

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and have, like Christ, special affection for some who are most congenial to his disposition and tastes. He may love his family with purity and strength; and he may love life on earth, for which in the body he is fitted. But all this will be subordinate to the master principle within of supreme love to the Divine Being. God must be loved above all things, and all things lawful to be loved must be loved in Him. Consider then, seriously, whether you are willing thus to surrender all to the Lord, and whether you will thus leave all to follow Him. If you feel any hesitation, or lingering within, think seriously of the vanity of the world,—of its emptiness and disappointments. Think of eternity in its relation to time, both in its character and duration. Think how soon life will close, and how the rewards and honours of heaven, while bestowed by free grace, will nevertheless be distributed according to devotedness on earth. Think of the mercy and love of God to you in Christ. Think what sacrifice He has made to gain your whole heart; and how reasonable and gracious are His demands upon you. And think, again and again, on these things, until with the full consent of your judgment and will, you resolve to give your whole heart to the Lord.

3. Then, formally, and in Christ, consecrate

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*all you are, and all you have, to God, for ever.*  
Make no reserve. Keep back no part of the promised offering. Prescribe no conditions. Plead for no extraordinary manifestations. But simply *in* and *through* Christ, offer all to the Lord in faith, believing that when you pray you receive the things you ask, and you shall have them. Perfect Love,—that pearl of great price ; the white stone, only known to him who receiveth it ; the fine linen, white and clean ; the wedding garment of meetness for the marriage supper of the Lamb,—shall be your's, and you shall be brought to the King in raiment of needlework, and be all glorious within.

Remember, however, that this state of grace and salvation is *attainable by faith*, and not by works of righteousness. A serious error has been committed by many in seeking this entire devotion to God, piecemeal. They have dissected their fallen and corrupt nature ; anatomized it ; and laid it bare, with its corruptions ; and then sought, by self-mortifications, and daily efforts for improvement, to overcome and to eradicate the evils within. This is a capital mistake committed by sincere and earnest Protestant instructors in modern times, as well as by ascetics and recluses in early centuries. It is beginning at the end, instead of at the beginning. There must be care, and diligence,

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and determined self denial, to attain entire devotedness to God. But when Perfect Love flows into the soul and fills it, self love, the love of the world, and the love of the creature, are thereby excluded ; just as darkness is excluded from an apartment when light flows into it—

“ Where fear, and sin, and grief expire,  
Cast out by perfect love.”

Receiving this Perfect Love as a free gift from the Father, through faith in Jesus Christ, on the unreserved and entire surrender of yourself to God, with all you have, then you must watch, and pray, and keep yourself pure by circumspection and diligence. And thus walking in the light, as God is in the light, you shall have fellowship with the pure and obedient ; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, availing for you moment by moment, to wash you from the defilement of all involuntary defects, errors, and transgressions, shall cleanse you from all sin ; so that at any instant when you may expire, you shall be found clothed in white raiment, and be prepared, through Divine grace, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

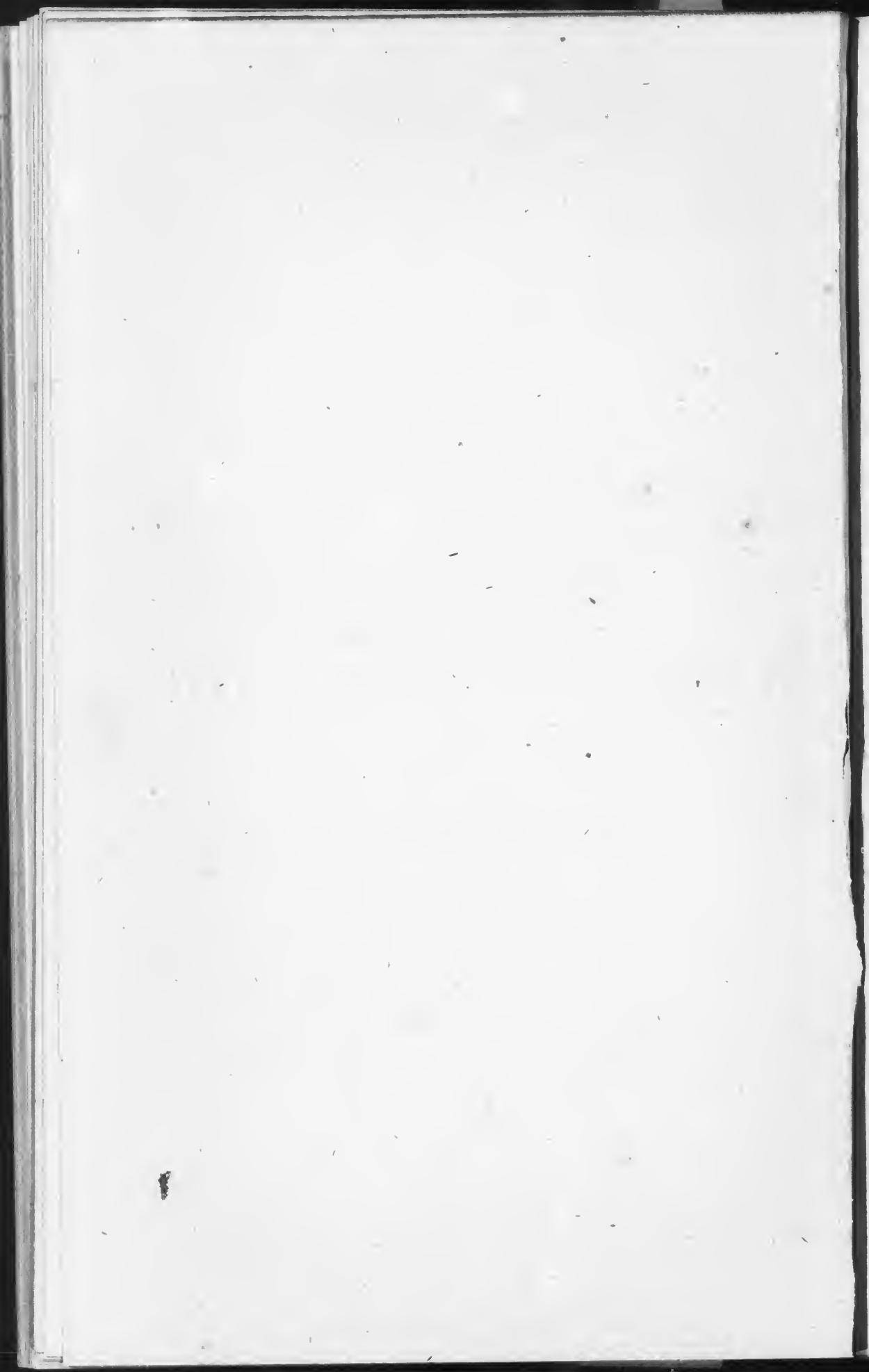


VI.

WORKING FOR GOD

IN

SAVING SOULS.



## WORKING FOR GOD.

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Reader,

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR GOD IN THE WORLD? He has done much for you. He gave you life; has preserved you amidst innumerable dangers; and has bestowed upon you countless blessings. Has He separated you from an ungodly world, adopted you into His spiritual family, and made you a joint-heir with Christ or an everlasting inheritance? Then you are under infinite obligations to the Almighty. What return are you making for all His benefits? You know His will, that He would have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. You have received His command, "Go work to-day in My vineyard." And acknowledging yourself a servant of God, you profess to have consecrated all you are, and have, to Him. With these obligations, and professions, what have you done to promote the saving knowledge of the

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Most High among men? You have experimentally known the way of salvation for years past. What have you done to make known that way to others? Is there a man, woman, or child, on earth, that has turned to the Lord by your endeavours? Or is there a sinner saved by Divine grace, now in heaven, who owes his salvation, under God, to you? Numerous opportunities of usefulness have been given you. Immortal beings have thronged your path. They have lived, died, and passed into the eternal world, in your presence. Have you ever, of *set purpose*, and with *direct aim*, sought the conversion of one sinner to God? The past cannot be recovered. The dead cannot be recalled. The lost cannot now be saved. But there are multitudes still around you, ready to perish. Will you neither lift up your voice to warn them of their danger? nor reach forth a hand to rescue them from their perilous condition? Shall they, too, die, and you make no effort to save them?

Do you ask, **WHAT CAN I DO?** You can, by the help of God, save souls from death, whatever may be your station, or circumstances. If you will do good, as you have opportunity, you will find openings, and ways of religious usefulness presenting themselves,

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frequently. You may not be called to preach the Gospel, or to occupy a prominent place in the Church. You may be poor, unlearned, and straitened in pecuniary means. You may be the parent of a large and growing family, and have to eat your bread in the sweat of your face. You may be young in years, and young in grace. Or, you may in position, education, and worldly substance, be above many. But all, whether rich or poor, learned or illiterate, young or old, are called to work for God. There is no monopoly for any privileged class of doing good. No chartered company of saints, holding the exclusive right of saving sinners. Every Israelite has his lot. Every servant of the Lord his station; and that, not by chance, or accident, but by Divine appointment. All have not the same gifts and opportunities. To one the great Master gives five talents, to another two, and to another one. And some have a larger sphere of usefulness allotted to them than others. But every believer in Christ has something to do for God in the world. What is to be your part in the harvest-field will be seen in your station, endowments, acquirements, and associations; and, if there be in you a willing mind proposing the inquiry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have *me* to do?"—you will not be left in doubt con-

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cerning your vocation, as a servant of God among mankind.

Look around. "The field is the world." It is wide and open for your labour. Are there no unconverted persons within the circle of your own **FAMILY AND FRIENDS**? How false and cruel is the forbearance of many professing followers of Christ towards the unsaved of their own households and acquaintances! They reprove the swearer in the street, and warn him of his danger. They go forth from their dwellings to rescue the degraded and the fallen in pent-up courts and alleys; but for the perishing among their own kindred, who are daily before them, they have no voice of warning, and no hand of deliverance. How unfavourably must this glaring inconsistency impress the neglected ones. And if they perish, what will be their reproaches of unfaithful relatives, in the place of perdition! How will they continue to blame and to lament the unfaithfulness which left them to pursue death, uncorrected, and unreproved! And how will they dart their fiery glance of condemnation upon those who neglected them, when all shall appear together at the judgment-seat of Christ! Let not family fondness and partiality hide from view the sinfulness and danger of the unconverted in your own home; and let not

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false delicacy prevent set and determined efforts to deliver intimate friends from going down into the pit. Ponder their state, as sinners before God, and exposed to His wrath, until you exclaim with Esther, "How can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred!" and until all your dormant energies are drawn forth on their behalf.

There is one mode of doing good to friends and acquaintances that is not duly estimated and employed by many, and that is EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE. Even where constitutional timidity, and affectionate familiarity, may have induced prolonged silence, on sinfulness and danger, in personal intercourse, yet, in written communications, the most unwelcome truths may be told. This is a form of Christian usefulness which ought to be far more extensively employed than it is. Letter-writing, by Christian men and women, should be consecrated to God for saving objects. Relatives should sacredly employ this means for religious warning, counsel, and instruction, as the character and circumstances of their correspondents may require. Pious females, who, in the modesty of their sex, and in the retirement of their comparative youth, shrink from public associations and agencies, may find, in this employment a channel through which they may

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unostentatiously pour forth the streams of their compassionate sympathy, and prayerful efforts for the unconverted. And men of business could—with prudence, and in proper season—insert, in their written communications, words of solicitude for the spiritual welfare of those to whom they write, which God might render effectual to the salvation of sinners.

GODLY CONVERSATION is a mode of usefulness to be employed, especially in the family and household. This is a service for God too much neglected by many Christian professors. They seem to forget that this is a Divinely-appointed means of grace, to be employed for mutual edification and blessing. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,” says the apostle, St. Paul; (Eph. iv. 29;) “but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” The topics of conversation, and the mode of their treatment, should be prayerfully considered by members of Christian families, and by Christian visitors. How humiliating and senseless—to say nothing of unfaithfulness to Christ—is the chat and easy gossip in the evening parties of many professed disciples of the Saviour. No wonder that their families should want the pastimes and games of the ungodly

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to amuse and engage them. How many precious hours are thus squandered away; and how many favourable opportunities for usefulness are lost for ever! It would be indiscreet, and unreasonable, to obtrude religious topics indiscriminately upon assembled friends at all times, and in all places; nor would funeral sadness of tone, or countenance, become the festive board; but with due regard to the proprieties of life, and with the wisdom which cometh from above, it will be found in this instance, more especially, that "a word spoken in due season, how good is it!"

Personal efforts for the conversion of UN-GODLY SERVANTS is a plain Christian duty. And yet, how many there are who busy themselves in agencies of public benevolence, and entirely neglect those who are immediately before them, and in their daily employ. Strict regulations are enforced, it may be, for attendance at family worship, and at Sabbath services in the house of God; but no determined effort is made by personal intercourse, even by the mistress with the maid-servant, to bring her to think seriously of her state, as a sinner, and to turn to God. The influence of a Christian master, or of a Christian mistress, upon a servant-man, or a servant-woman, is a responsibility not to be overrated; and ought to be

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diligently improved by those who, under Divine Providence, occupy this relationship. There need be no hindrance here for want of confidence and opportunity. Time, and access, may be secured at pleasure. And by whom are the unregenerate in Christian households to be spoken to, in faithfulness, on their spiritual state, but by those who hold authority over them? What power for good to souls is in possession of mill-owners, and manufacturers, if they would employ it for the thousands of both sexes, who toil under them for daily bread! So, with merchants, and shopkeepers, who have continually about them clerks, and servers, prepared to receive counsel, and who would be grateful for interest taken in their welfare.

Endeavours to do good to souls must not, however, be confined within the family, the household, the warehouse, or the shop. There are UNGODLY NEIGHBOURS beyond, to be warned, invited, and entreated to turn to God for salvation. How lamentable is the fact, that in the very precincts, and within the very shadow of the believer's home, souls are perishing for lack of knowledge! This is so in thousands and tens of thousands of instances. And yet the professed servant of God, and follower of the Saviour, can go in and out among such persons; exchange with them looks and words of friendly

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recognition; and speak to them of weather, business, and the political questions of the day, but never utter a syllable to them on the eternal interests of their souls. Were they seriously ill, and in immediate danger of death, their godly neighbours, would go to them, and speak to them of their spiritual condition. At least, godly neighbours *think* they would do so. But, because the unconverted are not prostrate by disease, not distracted with pain, nor delirious with fever, they are left without a word of warning, to pursue their way to destruction. If similar neglect were shown to the bodies and temporal circumstances of men, how loud would be the condemnation! Should a neighbour be left unwarned of known injury that was approaching,—or if left to perish in the water in sight of one who could stretch forth the hand of rescue, but forbore to do so,—how indignant would be the public complaint! But immortal souls, in too many instances, are left to sink down to perdition unheeded, and to exclaim as they pass away, “No man cared for our souls!” To warn the wicked of their danger, and to seek their deliverance from sin and eternal death, is a positive Christian duty, which cannot be neglected with impunity. “Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbour.” “If thou forbear to

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deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain ; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not ; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it ? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it ? and shall not He render to every man according to his works ?" How many neglecters of public worship might be induced to attend the house of God, and to hear words whereby they would be saved, if Christian neighbours earnestly and affectionately invited them to do so !

And how many *stragglers* and *occasional attendants* there are in the house of God, who would become stated worshippers, and join themselves to the Church, in its more intimate communion and fellowship of believers, if invited to do so. It is a complaint against almost every community of professing Christians, that they do not, in their assemblies, sufficiently attend to strangers, and that they do not more cordially welcome them to religious means and ordinances. And thus, sons and daughters of godly parents, who, from the necessities of business, and through family alliances, have removed from the homes and associations of childhood, are left, by chilling indifference and discouraging neglect, to decline from the ways of God, and to seek companionship with the world. Wakeful attention to strangers in the

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house of God, and affectionate invitations to the devout amongst them to join the church in its more social and solemn ordinances, will do much to extend the kingdom of Christ on the earth.

Then there are the Young to be instructed and trained in SABBATH SCHOOLS. How many intelligent, educated, and influential persons there are in Christian churches, who pass Sabbath hours in sleepy indolence which might be profitably spent among the children of the poor, and of the ungodly! How many well-informed young men, and accomplished young women there are, who might lead multitudes of boys and girls into the peaceful and pleasant way of Wisdom, if they would become earnest labourers in Sunday Schools; but who shrink from such employment, as being too rude and offensive in its associations for them. They admire the philanthropy of Howard, in his visits to filthy dungeons; and the compassionate benevolence of Florence Nightingale, in her night watches over gashed and wounded soldiers on a foreign shore. They laud the patrons of Ragged Schools, where ignorance and guilt are lamentably combined in the unwashed children of criminals. But the dust of a Sabbath School, and its vulgar associations, both of teachers and scholars, are unbearable

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to refined and polished life ! This is a false and squeamish fancy, altogether unbecoming members of the church of Christ. Children in Sabbath Schools may be not only instructed in mind, and elevated in manners, but converted to God. It is a false idea of some over prudent persons, that conversions are not to be sought among little children. As soon as the will can decide for the service of God, a child may be converted. And in this respect, all who are converted, however far advanced in life, become as little children. The Saviour Himself has expressly declared, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The direction of the pliant mind of the young, and the pre-occupation of their hearts with saving truth, is a work for God in the world, worthy of the loftiest aspiration, and of the most highly accomplished instrumentality. And until the well-educated, most influential, and most zealous church-members shall press more numerously into this inviting field of Christian labour, it will not be reaped in its richest and most abundant fruit.

Another department of Christian labour is in the distribution of RELIGIOUS TRACTS, and in the VISITATION OF THE POOR AND THE SICK. The call with a tract is a seasonable oppor-

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tunity for words on spiritual subjects. It is professedly connected with the souls of men ; and in many instances has led to conversations saving in their results ; while the tract left is, in itself, a messenger of grace. Personal visitation of the afflicted and the distressed is the scriptural test of pure and undefiled religion. No business engagements, no offering of gold or silver, can be admitted as a plea for neglecting this duty. It is what Christ requires of all His followers, and it cannot be performed by proxy. He has left the poor and the sick as His representatives on earth ; and at His coming He will adjudge neglect, or attention, to them, as shown towards Himself.

And there is one character of service to the poor and the sick that many might perform, with blessed effect,—that is *Reading the Scriptures* to them in their own homes. Why should not a Christian young man who has leisure and opportunity for doing so, go forth, with a Bible in his pocket, to dark streets and alleys of the city, or to wayside cottages of villages and hamlets, and entering the abodes of the poor, kindly converse with them on spiritual and eternal subjects, and then ask permission to read a chapter from the word of God, and to pray with them ? And why should not the Christian woman, sufficiently free from

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domestic engagements, go forth to similar service for her own sex? "Devout and honourable women, not a few," might be thus most usefully employed. In most cases, such benevolent visits would be gratefully received. The poor, for the most part, are ready to appreciate generous attention from those above them in rank and station of life. "Scripture Readers," and "Bible Women," employed agents, are seldom rejected by the labouring and operative classes; and the unremunerated visits of those above them in station would be doubly welcome. "Brothers" and "Sisters of Charity," not abjuring the social relations of life, and who shall go forth as evangelists to the ignorant, the destitute, and the ungodly, are what the world, in its sinfulness and misery, especially needs. Female Agency has, from the beginning, been a distinctive feature in Christianity. Holy women were intimately associated with the Saviour in His life, and acts of mercy. Christian females are expressly named by the Apostles as helpers, and as fellow-labourers with them in the Gospel of Christ. And the Church, in its most active and prosperous periods, has not failed to employ them.

There are other means of usefulness to be employed; such as speaking seasonable words to those who may be brought into contact with

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Christian professors in *their travels*. In these days of easy and rapid transit from place to place, this mode of doing good may be extensively pursued. A weighty word for God may be spoken in a steam-boat, or in a railway-carriage, that shall never be forgotten. Then, there are trusts, and duties, belonging to the wealthy, who, as stewards for their Lord, have surplus funds to employ. There are *Day Schools* to be provided for children of ignorance and want in populous neighbourhoods; and there are *Places of Worship*, to be supplied for adult poor, who cannot themselves raise them. He who establishes a Day School, or builds a House for the worship of God, performs a service, which in its results, shall benefit succeeding generations. And for a man to have loved his nation, and built it a synagogue, is a memorable record of the Church that will not soon be effaced. There is the support, the increase, and the training of a *living Ministry*, which is of Divine institution, and which combines in itself, the source and means of almost all Christian activities. There are *Missions to the Heathen*, so prosperous and inviting, to be supported and collected for; and there is the *circulation of the Scriptures*, to be perseveringly promoted. The rich can give of their abundance, and, by large contributions to the cause of God, provoke

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one another to love and to good works ; and the poor can give out of their penury, and collect the pence of others for the cause of God. But, the means for doing good are endless ; and zeal for God will never lack forms and modes of usefulness. Love is inventive ; and if it does not find opportunities ready for its exercise, it will create them. And when the passion for saving souls from death has taken firm hold of a Christian man, or woman, it will frame both ways and means for accomplishing its objects.

READER, look around, upon the wide open field of Christian labour set before you, and now inquire,—WHAT SHALL I DO FOR GOD IN THE WORLD ? Consider what are your means and circumstances ; in what departments of service you can do most good ; and resolve to do it, in the strength of the Lord. The MOTIVES for your doing so are numerous and powerful.

Think of *the state of the world*, both at home and abroad. Think of sin, as it unblushingly appears in the public streets and thoroughfares of cities, and as it gloats and shelters itself in homes, both of the rich and poor. Think of *Drunkenness*,—open, shameless, vile intemperance,—as it reels before you at mid-day, and as

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it soaks its senseless victims in saloons and "shades" at night. Think how *Sensuality* flaunts and exhibits itself on almost every path. Think not only of *Infidelity*, spreading its poisonous sentiments by numerous periodical publications: but also of bold, daring *Atheism*, standing forth on the public highway, and offering a stone to them that ask for bread, and a scorpion to them who ask for an egg. Think of *Sabbath-breaking*, in this Christian land. Think of *Juvenile depravity and crime*. Think of wide-spread *ungodliness*, as shown in the last census of attendants (or rather non-attendants) on public worship. Think of the vast majority of *heathens and idolaters*, in the world, in this the nineteenth century of Christianity. Think of the overwhelming numbers of deluded *Papists* over Protestants in professing Christendom. Think of the *rationalizing efforts* of dignitaries of the Church, set for the defence of Revealed Truth among us. Think of all these things, and delay not to do something to lessen the amount of evil there is in the world.

And consider how *short and uncertain is your time for Christian labour*. A considerable portion of life has gone;—gone for ever;—with all its unimproved opportunities of usefulness. Many who ought to have been the objects of

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your prayerful efforts, are dead. They have passed to their eternal doom; and you will never see them again until you meet them at the bar of God. What need of diligence in redeeming the time, and in buying up, by earnest labour, every fragment of it that remains in seeking the salvation of sinners! Especially, when it is remembered, that life is uncertain, and that now is the only opportunity of doing good to the ungodly. You may die at any moment. Your breath is in your nostrils. And the work of saving souls will not extend beyond the grave. Heaven itself, affords not this privilege.

But consider, also, the *honour and rewards of usefulness*. On earth the best distinctions are gained by service to our fellow-beings. They who have obtained a good report, have, like Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, and Martin Luther, largely benefited mankind. The Saviour has declared usefulness to be the standard of greatness among His followers,—saying, “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many!” And in every Christian community there are names of those who did extensive

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good to others, embalmed within its memory beyond what worldly position or wealth could ensure. To save a soul from death is a higher achievement than to open and shut the windows of heaven by miracle : as St. James has taught. For, after referring to the unexampled power of Elijah's praying faith over nature, he says, emphatically, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him ; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

And, what *grateful pleasure there is in the review of usefulness to souls !* It is heart-glad-denning to look back on acts of benevolence and service to others. How delightful to Wilber-force, and Clarkson, to review their persevering efforts for the emancipation of slaves ! How consoling to Howard, to Mrs. Fry, and to Sarah Martin, the remembrance of their exertions for the relief and improvement of prisoners ! But how surpassingly joyous to the Christian labourer to think of the salvation of many sinners through his personal efforts, and to say in death, like Harlan Page, "I know that by the grace of God more than one hundred souls have been converted through my own personal and direct instrumentality !" Sweet is the return of the labourer from his honest toil in the Master's

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field ! and how it smooths the descent to the grave, to remember bygone years spent in useful service for God ! while the prospect brightens in the heaven beyond, with the dying Christian's anticipation of joining, before the throne of a glorified Redeemer, saved ones whom he snatched as brands from the burning ! What gems and coronets await laborious and successful servants at the day of the Lord ! What "crowns of rejoicing" in the radiant appearance of sinners saved by their endeavours ! What distinguished honour, and overpowering joyfulness, when the King shall say to them on His right hand, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"—declaring that what was done for the needy and the perishing is rewarded as if it had been done personally to Himself. And how high the honours to be possessed and enjoyed by such in eternity ! Memory will not be obliterated by death and the grave ; and the remembrance of what was done for God on earth, will heighten enjoyment in heaven; while the sight of sinners saved by their instrumentality, will swell the rapture of faithful servants before the throne. There are degrees in glory. There are thrones, and dominions, under God, reserved for the diligent. He that has improved ten talents

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shall rule over ten cities. And "they that have turned many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." What lures ! What motives for saving souls !

Begin *immediately* to do something for God in the world. Delay not an hour. You have delayed too long. Difficulties will increase, rather than diminish by procrastination. Speak to those who are near to you, and immediately under your influence. Warn them of their danger, if they are unsaved. Tell them of Christ who died for them. Love for souls, and love for the Saviour will give you freedom, and expression. Go to your ungodly neighbour. Show him that he is in the broad road which leadeth to destruction. Invite him to your pew in the house of God. Take him by the hand and lead him into the way of life. Visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction ; gather the lambs to the good Shepherd ; and by some distinctive agency, and some decided effort, endeavour to bring sinners to the Saviour. Say not that you have not time. What is time for, but that in it man may work for eternity ? Say not that you are too young. "A child may save a soul." Say not that you are too weak and obscure. A worm, in the power of God, may thrash a mountain ; and every human being has power for good or evil

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in the world. Say not that you have engagements, in domestic and in public affairs, which will detain you. "Let the dead bury their dead," said Christ. Leave all to follow Him in going about doing good. Be deaf to discouraging suggestions from Satan, and your own corrupt nature. Let no self-indulgent desire for rest restrain you. Earth is the place of labour. Heaven is the place of rest. Work for God who made you, and who sustains you, moment by moment. Work for the Saviour who "loved you, and gave Himself for you, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour!" Work for sinners that are perishing, and appealing to you for help. Work diligently; "for the night cometh, when no man can work." Work perseveringly. Let not a day pass, without some determined effort to save sinners! Work in prayerful dependence on the Holy Ghost for success; for it is, "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." Work to the end; and then in death, you shall be able to say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."— "Holy Father, I come to Thee."



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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